

El Gato News

Senior Issue

2025



LGHS staff presents Fractured Follies variety show

by **Siyona Singhal**
News Editor

Every year, members of the LGHS faculty gather to rehearse and perform in Fractured Follies, a show with funny skits, dance numbers, the LGHS teacher band, and lots of fun. During the days leading up to the performance, staff and students prepared for an amazing night.

LGHS teacher **Kim Burlinson** has been performing in the show for 12 years. She commented that her favorite aspect of being a part of Fractured Follies is “the energy we get from each other and the energy we get back from the kids. Every year I say that I’m too tired and busy and won’t do it this year, and then **[Paris DeSoto]** puts it out there, and I’m like, ‘I have to do this, it’s so fun.’” She explained her favorite moments of past shows: “[**Mollie Hicock-Parker**] was Weird Barbie in the show last year, and she was so great, and of course **[Tyler McGlashan]** always just like super brings it with his costumes and energy, and you never know what he’s going to do on stage.” Burlinson also shared that she often feels nervous before performing: “I’ve never been a theater arts person, and I always get that butterfly feeling before I go. I think Ms. DeSoto is the only one who could get me to do it.”

Fractured Follies MC **Kevin Rogers** also explained his favorite aspects of the show: “Getting to work more closely with teachers that I rarely get to see during the year; the camaraderie and big boost in teacher and student spirit; and being a goofball with some of my favorite people on earth.” Rogers’s best-loved skits from past years

have been the elevator skit, even though it required lots of practice, and of course, the Big Baby skit, where he wore a onesie. Fellow MC **Kurt Kroesche** described his favorite feature of Fractured Follies: “It’s such a privilege to celebrate the year together as a community, laughing, singing, and dancing. I love that.” He also added that he enjoys when anyone is wearing a diaper.

For DeSoto, the show’s director, the highlight of each show is the finale, “when everyone in the auditorium stands up and sings. It encapsulates the best of the Wildcat spirit.” She added that another high point of the show is “dancing with twenty-plus teachers from different departments, many of whom I only see at staff meetings otherwise.” DeSoto explained that the hardest part of Fractured Follies is organizing nearly 50 teachers, comparing it to “herding cats in the best and worst ways.” DeSoto asserted that she “used to [get nervous] when I thought it was important that I dance, sing, or act flawlessly, but now all I do is make sure that I’m having the most fun ever anytime I’m on stage.”

This year’s Follies show took place on Thursday, May 22 and Friday, May 23 in the LGHS theater. All proceeds for both shows benefitted The Teal Foundation, a local organization that supports ovarian cancer patients and research. If you missed the show this year, make sure to attend next May to support a local foundation and experience a night full of great performances.



REHEARSE REHEARSE REHEARSE: Teachers get ready for the Follies production.

El Gato’s Ghost Hunters tackle LG paranormal activity

by **Nelson Kramer**
Humor Editor

The lights are always on at Los Gatos High School – more than they ever used to be. A lot has changed since the school’s early days. From the original grammar school to the construction of the main building, 117 years leave room for many things: stories that go untold, strange experiences that are quietly buried, and moments that are dismissed for fear of sounding unhinged. We modernize buildings. New teachers take over classrooms. The ones who once whispered about odd encounters eventually retire. And still, the lights stay on. But sometimes, it feels like they’re not just for us.

In recent years, people have talked increasingly about strange encounters. Students pass along stories about moving objects in the ASB office and several teachers and administration share tales of their experiences with the spirits that roam the empty halls at night.

The El Gato Ghost Hunting team took it upon themselves to explore some widely-feared regions of the school, as many suspect the underbelly of the high school is where haunted entities rest during the day, lying in darkness, hiding from the unsuspecting eyes of students. Many teachers know it is best for them to steer

clear of places like the old boiler room. Some say teachers and staff make up these stories to scare their students, but maybe teachers are the ones who linger long enough through the halls to notice.

Owen Fugit, Hayley Strahs, and I felt startled by the immediate change in atmosphere when Assistant Principal **Kristi Grasty** turned her key to open up the door to the location informally known as the southern air vents. We felt unwelcome as we made our way carefully down the narrow and steep staircase. When it comes to detecting paranormal activity, it takes an innate sense, something that outsiders to certain spaces have trouble picking up, something that teachers who stay late to grade papers know all too well. A hostile feeling, a notion that another presence is lingering nearby or in the room.

Ghosts are fickle creatures. They most notably only show their specter forms to those with whom they are most familiar, those that they think can help them. The spirit in Room 11 has only one documented sighting by English teacher **Kristen Austin**, and she has detailed her many sightings of a feminine spirit whose singed visage even now haunts her. As for the origins of this being, it could have something to do with the great fires of 1901. A common passer-by now a lurking spirit; is she looking for help, or possibly vengeance?

Some say it’s best to stray away from eliciting the spread of such stories like these, as it brings life to the terrifying reality that lies within the paranormal world. Who truly knows where the spirits have gone? Maybe they’ve passed on. Or maybe they are in search of a new teacher to haunt, someone who is not looking for them at all.



SPOOKY PLACE: The Ghost Hunters view the subterranean boiler room.

Seniors design their prom Businesses open downtown

by **Ainsley Northrop**
Editor-in-Chief

After months of planning, the Los Gatos High School Leadership team held Senior Prom on May 10 at Levi’s Stadium. A long-anticipated annual event, prom served as one of the final high school bonding experiences for the soon-graduating class of 2025.

Both members of the Leadership class since their freshman years, seniors **Gianna Conway** and **Ava Thompson** did the bulk of the planning for this year’s dance. Conway, the senior class president, explained the process: “First, we decided where we wanted to have prom, and then we had to book the venue, DJ, and photographer. Then, we had to work out the details like decorations, food, games, and centerpieces, as well as ticket sales.” This year, the team settled on the theme of the Golden Gala because as Senior Class Vice President Thompson explained, they “liked the idea of elegant decorations.” To adhere to their chosen theme, Thompson and Conway communicated with Levi’s and vendors for decorations, and Conway assembled centerpieces for each table at the event.

beverages, professional decorations such as an LGHS sign and photobooth, and ambient golden lighting. Senior **Megan Jurek** remarked, “I really liked the venue. It was nice to see all my friends and the games were pretty cool.”

Both Conway and Thompson deemed planning the dance a growing experience that improved their communication skills. Thompson reasoned, “You had to be able to manage and talk to a lot of people, and you had to be clear about what you wanted... There’d be a lot going on, and Levi’s has several events, too, so we had to communicate ahead of time.” While it was a difficult process, both seniors emphasized the fun they had while planning it, especially because it was their last big leadership event of their high school career.

Thompson detailed that beyond being a fun night, “Prom creates a sense of class community.” She explained, “People feel like they have a place to belong in the school and that they are kind of part of something greater than themselves. So I think people can feel a sense of pride in their class.”

While the year is nearly over, LGHS Leadership still had a few events left to plan: Senior Decision Day on May 20, a Blood Drive on May 22, and the upcoming additional “Senior Week” activities. Reflecting on her time spent in leadership and at LGHS in general, Thompson concluded, “Senior Prom was a good way to kind of celebrate the end of the four years we’ve had together at Los Gatos.”

by **Kloe Adams**
Editorial Editor

As summer comes into bloom, downtown Los Gatos is experiencing its own blossoming with a new bakery, proposed store plans, and goodbyes to beloved parts of LG.

After two years of anticipation, Petals Creamery, a Persian ice cream shop that also serves baked goods and pastries, held their opening on May 17. Located where clothing shop Gymboree once was, Petals Creamery will be open during the week from 11:00 AM to 8:00 PM and until 11:00 PM on Fridays and Saturdays. Over two years ago, friends and now owners Nathan Gaudreau and Marcel Khorsand signed a lease to open an ice cream shop inspired by Persian culture. Although they hit a few bumps in the road involving the permitting process and equipment shipments, Petals Creamery has officially arrived just in time for summer.



WELCOME IN: The new Petals Creamery is now open.

Growing up in the Bay Area, Khorsand attended Leigh High School while Gaudreau attended Saratoga High. Khorsand took the lead in decorating, incorporating stained glass which hangs from the ceiling as well as posters which cover the walls. From the beautiful saffron eclair to the rose yuzu lemonade ice cream, all of the food and treats Petals Creamery offers are a product of Khorsan and Gaudreau’s cultural upbringing. Throughout the recipes, saffron plays a large role. The name Petals Creamery even comes from the taste of saffron flowers. Khorsand commented: “I love

working with saffron. It’s my favorite ingredient. And it became a symbol of what I do. I also work with rose a lot, so there are a lot of floral flavors in our food.”

Another addition making its way to downtown Los Gatos has residents both excited and nervous. According to the PlanHub contractor platform, America’s largest book retailer Barnes & Noble wants to occupy a newly available commercial space. Only three blocks away from independent shop Beyond Text Bookstore, beloved owner Tanya Sedneva is grappling with the news. Sedneva reflected: “I’m upset. I need some time to think what I can do.” Remaining optimistic, Sedneva looks towards other successful and independent businesses in town, such as Icing on the Cake and Domus. Underscoring that her indie shop offers a more personal experience than a big chain could provide, Sedneva pointed out that she does not order bulk and maintains a curated collection.

While new additions pop up in Los Gatos, several shops and a cafe say their farewells. Vidi Vici Gallery, leasing month-to-month, was told to vacate the premises. Owner Nino Demiani expressed frustration due to the work the shop did to improve the space over a year ago. “It was a big mess,” he said. “We spent like three months cleaning it.” Investing in renovations last year, Demiani vocalized, “We basically lost our money here – big. It’s not just the money. That’s a year of our lives, gone.” Other significant losses downtown include candy shop Lolli & Pops and the longstanding Travel Advisors of Los Gatos. (Sources: Los Gatan)



CLOSING TIME: A sign hangs outside of Vidi Vici Gallery.



SQUAD UP: Members of El Gato pose together at Prom.

Conway noted that one of the biggest challenges was securing the venue and maximizing its benefits: “Working with Levi’s was hard because they are under construction for hosting the Super Bowl next year. Because we couldn’t see the field during the event, and Levi’s was busy, we had to figure out ways to compensate for that.” To do so, Conway and Thompson ensured that Senior Prom had several games for students to play, high-quality snacks and



ALL SMILES: Seniors show their dresses and corsages.

Beloved teacher Ken Porush bids LGHS goodbye

by **Nelson Kramer**
Humor Editor

Longtime LGHS teacher **Kenneth Porush** has always described himself as a nerd. He was inspired by the world of science, spent some time studying medicine in college and eventually switched his field of study to education. Through his genuine interest in teaching and past experiences helping kids as a camp counselor, playground supervisor, CPR instructor, and tutor, Porush set himself up for success on this path.

Porush’s first teaching job was at Steinbeck Middle School, where he taught eighth grade science. It was a trial by fire. “If you can do that, you can do just about anything,” he reflected, recalling the challenges of managing the unpredictable student behavior and adjusting to a curriculum far removed from his training in life sciences. He moved from Steinbeck to Lincoln High School, and then, finally, to Los Gatos High School, a place that became his professional home for more than two decades. “The move to high school was not quite night and day, but pretty close,” he said. “High school students are more focused. And let’s be honest – I’m not a morning person. High school fits me better.”



SNAPSHOT: Porush grins for a photo in his classroom.

Porush’s teaching philosophy has always been about structure with warmth. He believes in setting clear expectations while giving students space to grow. “You don’t have to love chemistry, but you do have to give it a shot,” he reasoned. “It’s about effort and growth. If a student learns to light a Bunsen burner with confidence, or finally understands

stoichiometry, that’s a win.” Signature experiences in his class include the supersaturation lab, where salt crystals form spontaneously in water, and the retired yet famous silver mirror lab in AP Chemistry. One of Porush’s most impactful teaching moments was when he helped a student who had transferred midyear into AP Chemistry and eventually excelled into medical school, crediting Porush for his success. Other alums have pursued chemistry, medicine, and related fields, often noting his class as a pivotal experience.

After 36 years of teaching, Porush is ready for the next chapter – preferably one without lab prep or 20-minute lunches. “I’m tired,” he admitted. “It’s the same labs, the same tests, and even sometimes, the same jokes. It’s time to do something else.” His plans are blissfully unscheduled: maybe some traveling, working out, reconnecting with friends, and perhaps even returning to the Silicon Valley Gay Men’s Chorus, with which he once performed.

Porush noted the legacy he wanted to leave, not awards or accolades. Instead, he speaks of students who grew in his class, whether they went on to careers in science or simply developed confidence they didn’t know they had. “It took me about 25

years to feel like I really knew what I was doing,” he reflected. “So if you’re just starting and don’t feel like an expert yet, be patient with yourself. Growth takes time.” And that is the most fitting lesson from a teacher who turned challenging concepts into ah-moments, who believed in structure with soul, and who taught students to trust both the process and themselves. Porush may be retiring from the classroom, but the reactions he catalyzed will continue for years to come.



FUNKY FASHION: Porush rocks a snazzy sweater.

Mariana Cozzella retires

by **Megan Saul**
Culture Editor

After 14 years at Los Gatos High School, treasured Wellness Center coordinator **Mariana Cozzella** has decided to retire at the end of the 2024-2025 school year. Known for her caring demeanor and supportive nature, the LGHS community will surely miss her presence on campus next year.



LANDSCAPE: Cozzella poses alongside a great view.

Cozzella attended college in São Paulo, Brazil. Following her graduation from the University of São Paulo, she moved to Montreal, Canada. There, she worked as a French teacher, her first role interacting with students. In 2007, Cozzella moved to California, and shortly after, she began working at Los Gatos. Her first position at the school was working in the library, where she remained for ten years. Following COVID and the pandemic, her focus at Los Gatos shifted. She explained, “Others and I came up with the concept for the Wellness Center. At first, we didn’t really know what we were doing, so we visited other Wellness Centers and fabricated our own vision.” Cozzella helped lead the making of the Wellness Center by establishing protocols, acquiring the space from leadership, and creating a plan for the area. When referring to the process involved with making the Wellness Center, Cozzella explained that the school completely supported it: “The idea was very accepted, especially by [Heath Rocha], our superintendent. He gave us free rein about what we wanted to do.” Since the Wellness Center’s creation, students at Los Gatos have enjoyed and popularized it. Additionally, other schools hoping to create their own wellness areas have visited LG’s Wellness Center seeking inspiration

As the coordinator of the Wellness Center, Cozzella meets and connects with students of all ages. She remarked, “I really treasure the relationships that I formed with the students. I’m going to take that with me forever. I keep in touch with ones who graduated, like seven, eight years ago, and it’s super cool to see where life takes them. I thought I was privileged to just see where life takes my daughters, but now there are so many more students that I also get to follow where they’re going.”

On top of working as the Wellness Center coordinator, Cozzella is also the peer-to-peer education advisor. Groups she oversees include Reality Check, AdvoCATS, Sources of Strength, and more. Cozzella expressed, “In the groups, we have all become close, and seeing the students achieving something is really nice.” After having advised these groups for the past 14 years, the absence of Cozzella next year will be an adjustment manageable only with the help of **Liz Olson**, the new advisor for Reality Check, and **Debbie Cooper**, the new coordinator of the Wellness Center.

In retirement, Cozzella is thrilled to travel more, sharing, “My husband and I are going to spend a few months in Italy and explore because that has already been a dream of mine. After that, we will see where it takes us.”

Reflecting on her time at Los Gatos, she stated, “I think that things fell into place, and things fell where they were supposed to be. I feel like I belong here, and I really trusted in that momentum.” As this chapter of Cozzella’s life comes to a close, students and staff bittersweetly wish her luck on her next journey. Cozzella concluded, “I don’t believe in leaving a mark, and I don’t want things to stay the same. I’m a firm believer in kindness and treating others well. So if that’s the mark I leave, then I’m happy.”

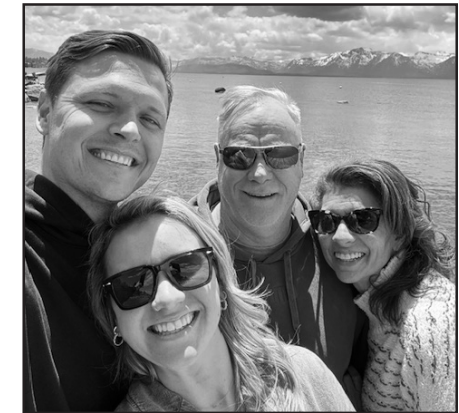


SELFIE TIME: Cozzella and her husband smile together.

Patricia Sutton leaves LG

by **Sam Gruetter and Nelson Kramer**
Opinion and Humor Editor

Los Gatos is celebrated for providing students with several unique educational opportunities and a wide variety of curricula. Out of the several electives it offers, both cooking and fashion stand out due to **Patricia Sutton**’s tireless work to improve the classes and her passion for education. Although it is Sutton’s final year teaching at Los Gatos, her impact on students and fellow staff will remain long past her retirement.



BIG SMILES: Sutton and family pose in front of a lake.

Sutton has been teaching for 38 years, spending her final 25 at Los Gatos teaching electives. Before teaching at Los Gatos, Sutton taught Spanish in Los Angeles and Saratoga. When she began teaching cooking and fashion design in 2000, she found no established curriculum because schools across the nation were defunding these courses. Subsequently, Sutton developed her own curriculum for both courses, showcasing her dedication to her profession and to her students. Her commitment extends far beyond her curriculum, however, as Sutton’s primary reason for teaching is the connection she fosters with students. She shared, “I’ve had many students, especially from my fashion classes, that have gone on into fashion careers that I’m still in contact with, and watching their journey as they navigate it, those are also kind of favorite moments, and I think about their past, how they start off here, and then how they’ve developed into businesses of their own and those are wonderful memories as well.”

Having taught both academic and elective courses, Sutton understands the individual value of each. She stated, “In an elective class, you get to use that creative side of your brain. You get out of your seat and use your hands. It’s just a different environment.” Sutton developed an early passion for teaching which, for her, began at just age 15. She worked at a private nursery school and found working with children a joyful experience. Although she initially planned to become an attorney, a pivotal home economics class changed her mind.

Throughout her career, Sutton has also made an impact beyond the classroom. She has participated in international educator exchanges, including a government-sponsored trip to Japan with Toyota and an exchange with teachers from Taiwan. She led student trips to Costa Rica and helped forge connections between her students and local businesses, many of which resulted in internships and lasting career opportunities.

In retirement, Sutton looks forward to traveling, spending time with her husband, and becoming a grandmother. She leaves knowing that her years of work — including the energy she put into various electives, the curriculum she crafted, and the connections she made with students and teachers alike — have built something lasting. She sees the work she put into the cooking and fashion programs as the legacy she wants to leave at LGHS, and she is confident another teacher will successfully carry the torch.



BALLOONS: Sutton celebrates a momentous occasion.

Tonya McQuade celebrates final weeks at LGHS

by **Quinn Hathaway and Britt Melinauskas**
National/World and Sports Editor

Tonya McQuade, an esteemed Los Gatos teacher, is retiring after 33 years of dedicated work in the English department. Los Gatos High School hired McQuade in 1992, following a short teaching stint in Japan and an additional year of teaching in Santa Barbara. McQuade earned her teaching credential from UC Santa Barbara and her master’s at San Jose State. While at Los Gatos, McQuade has taught English 9 Honors, English 9, English 10, English 11, and a Multicultural Perspectives elective.

McQuade’s interest in teaching stems from her family: both her parents and her grandmother were teachers. Originally, her thoughts centered on journalism, but certain factors ultimately swayed her towards teaching. McQuade commented, “[Teaching is] a very friendly job for having a family [as you are] able to have the same schedule as your kids.” In addition to all of her lessons at LGHS, McQuade specifically enjoys teaching poetry, as it offers students the creative freedom to explore their emotions. Over the years, she has published her own poetry and encourages students to pursue a love for the art themselves.

Throughout McQuade’s devoted years of teaching, she created and published her own work of nonfiction, *A State Divided*. McQuade explained the origin of her book: “Somebody found me on Ancestry.com and said that his dad had this box of old letters he had rescued



COMMEMORATION: McQuade poses during her retirement celebration.

from a house he was selling as a real estate agent, and that he found those names in my family tree.” She discovered letters written during the war by her own great-great-grandfather, James Calaway Hale, and his brother, Benjamin Petree. These particular letters are the storyline of her book, explaining her ancestors’ steps through the southern United States and traveling through the Oregon Trail from different family members’ perspectives.

Among her most cherished recollections at LG are her performances in the annual Fractured Follies. Specifically, she shared, “When we did my song Phoenix. That year, we raised money for the Paradise fires, **Kathleen Wehr** danced in it, and **Zachary Davison-Wilson** played guitar with me.”

As she enters her final weeks at LGHS, McQuade offers some heartfelt advice: “Keep learning new things. There are too many places in the world that are new to see, too many subjects to get excited about.” With years of accomplishments behind her, McQuade remains optimistic about the future, looking forward to pursuing her poetry, photography, and travels to national parks and South American countries, all while leaving a lasting legacy.

- Minor fatally shot in Virginia
- Sudan cuts relations with UAE

India and Pakistan agree to a ceasefire following US intervention

by **Siyona Singhal**
News Editor

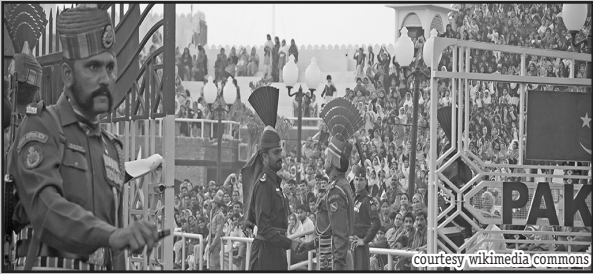
Since 1947, India and Pakistan have experienced tensions. Multiple clashes over the divided territory of Kashmir between both countries ultimately culminated in the events of Apr. 22. Pakistani gunmen opened fire on tourists visiting a popular town in Kashmir called Pahalgam, killing 26 visitors. The gunmen asked people to recite a specific Muslim prayer, killed them if they were unable to do so.

This attack sparked a strong reaction from India. On May 7, the country retaliated by launching a total of 25 strikes as part of Operation Sindoor. Operation Sindoor reflects a multi-domain, high-precision offensive spread across Pakistan's Punjab province and partly Pakistan-occupied Jammu and Kashmir, signalling a strategic evolution in India's approach to cross-border terrorism. India launched attacks in the areas of Muzaffarabad, Kotli, Barnala, Mehmoona Joya, Muridke, Sarjal, and Bahawalpur, killing 31 people. The attacks were meant to target terrorist infrastructure belonging to two militant groups.

On May 7, Pakistani and Indian fighter jets engaged in a "dog fight," which was one of the largest and longest in recent aviation

history. Pakistani officials say the fight destroyed five Indian planes out of a total of 125 jets, which fought for over an hour with neither side leaving their own airspace.

As an effort to avoid a full-blown war, Pakistan's defense minister claimed that the Pakistani army will only hit military areas in India, not civilians. On May 8, Pakistani troops destroyed Indian military checkpoints in six areas along the Line of Control, which divides the territory of Kashmir between both countries. The troops claimed to do this in response to "unprovoked firing" from the Indian side.



TRUCE: Pakistani citizens celebrate India-Pakistan ceasefire at the border.

Commercial airlines in India, like Air India, issued statements warning passengers to be aware of the security measures in airports and the rising tension between India and Pakistan. Passengers were also advised to arrive at the airport at least three hours before their scheduled boarding time, as many airports closed and flights were rerouted to avoid the Pakistani airspace. India has also asked streaming platforms to collectively remove all content that originated from Pakistan.

On May 10, India and Pakistan agreed to an immediate ceasefire after US-led talks. US President Donald Trump first announced the ceasefire, tweeting, "After a long night of talks mediated by the United States, I am pleased to announce that India and Pakistan have agreed to a full and immediate cease-fire. Congratulations to both countries on using common sense and great intelligence." However, hours after the ceasefire was announced, explosions could be heard across the cities of Srinagar and Jammu in Kashmir. The cause of the explosions has not yet been confirmed. During a televised address on the same day in the evening, India's Foreign Secretary accused Pakistan of violating the agreement, but Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif claimed that India had broken the ceasefire. (Sources: ABC, CNN, Time)

UK Prime Minister causes change

by **Chloe Wilson**
Humor Editor

Prime Minister Keir Starmer of the United Kingdom expressed his plan on May 12 to strengthen its requirements for legal migrants while also lengthening the wait for immigrants to attain citizenship. Declaring an end to what he described as a "squalid chapter," there will be several policy changes as he withstands a political onslaught from the country's increasingly forceful populist right.

Starmer's goal is to make getting work, family, and student visas in the United Kingdom more difficult. In a policy paper, the prime minister noted, "The damage [immigration] has done to our country is incalculable." Following these concerns, immigrants will have to meet the requirements of sufficient skills and proficiency in English, as well as wait for up to ten years to become British citizens, which had been raised from five years. This plan aims to reverse a long-standing rise in legal migration from other countries to Britain.

According to Starmer, the changes awaiting parliamentary approval are to prevent Britain from becoming "an island of strangers." The main goals are to keep social unity and motivate backing in the local workforce.

The prime minister's proposals follow less than two weeks after the anti-immigration Reform UK party, which Nigel Farage, a colleague of President Trump, led, made waves in municipal and community elections throughout England. Criticizing the announcement, Farage called Starmer "a hypocrite who believes in open borders."



CENTER STAGE: Nigel Farage discusses reform UK movement.



PITCH: Prime Minister Starmer hosts his first press conference.

Statistics prove that migration to the U.K. has increased by over three times during the past decade. The largest recipients of UK visas are Indians, and record numbers show that Americans have recently been applying for British citizenship in the past months as well.

Madeleine Sumption, director of the Migration Observatory at the University of Oxford, commented, "After Brexit, a new immigration system came in under the previous [Conservative] government that was surprisingly liberal, and there was a big and unexpected increase in migration to the UK, [causing] roll back some of those liberalizations and made some restrictions."

Starmer's controversial plan was to deport all asylum seekers, no matter where from, to Rwanda, though this plan was ultimately disapproved by courts and abandoned when the now prime minister defeated the then-prime minister Rishi Sunak in the election last summer.

Starmer's rhetoric has been considered harmful by many. "Shameful language like this will only inflame the fire of the far-right and risks further race riots that endanger survivors of horrors such as war, torture, and modern slavery," Steven Smith, CEO of Care4Calais, wrote. Smith concluded, "Starmer must apologize." (Sources: CNN, NPR)

Sudan ends relations with UAE

by **Britt Melinauskas**
Sports Editor

On May 6, Sudan cut diplomatic relations with the United Arab Emirates (UAE) due to suspected aid to paramilitary forces. Sudan accused the UAE of supporting the rival Rapid Support Forces (RSF) in the ongoing civil war, with the announcement following a series of RSF-led attacks on the typically secure city of Port Sudan. The attacks on Port Sudan began on May 5 and continued through May 8.

Sudan's Defence Minister Yassin Ibrahim accused the UAE of violating Sudan's sovereignty by supporting the RSF, an armed group fighting in the country. The UAE has strongly denied providing any money, weapons, or political help to the RSF. The war, which has lasted two years, has killed thousands of people, forced millions to flee, and caused one of the world's worst humanitarian crises. In response to the minister's statement, Sudan will pull its ambassador out of the UAE and close its embassy there.



DEAL: Ilham Aliyev meets with Chairman of Sovereign Council.

The UN's highest court rejected Sudan's case against the UAE, in which it had accused the Gulf nation of being complicit in genocide on May 5. The International Court of Justice in The Hague decided the case couldn't proceed because the UAE had excluded itself from Article 9 of the Genocide Convention, which prevents it from being sued by other nations over genocide accusations. Reem Ketait, the UAE's deputy assistant minister for political affairs, deemed the court's ruling as



CANDID: Drone photo captures Abu Dhabi, the capital of UAE.

"clear and decisive." She asserted, "The international community must focus urgently on ending this devastating war and supporting the Sudanese people, and it must demand that humanitarian aid reaches all those in need."

The Sudan council announced that it had chosen to label the UAE as an "aggressor state," asserting its right to take any necessary actions to defend the country's sovereignty and territorial integrity. In a televised speech from Port Sudan following the defense council's announcement, Sudan's army leader, Abdul Fattah al-Burhan, declared that the army would "defeat the militia and those who support and back it." He added, "We warn those who attacked the Sudanese people that the time for retribution will come, and the people will ultimately prevail," speaking in front of smoke rising from the damaged facilities.

Sudan's military has long accused the UAE of arming the RSF, a charge that the UAE has repeatedly denied. However, these allegations have gained significant attention and credibility, as some UN experts and US lawmakers have supported the claims, pointing to evidence from reports by human rights organizations. The increasing evidence has made it progressively difficult for the UAE to dismiss these claims entirely. (Sources: BBC, Reuters, The Guardian)

Canadian-American relations strain due to Prime Minister elections

by **Kat Littfin**
News Editor

Canadian-American foreign relations have become somewhat fractured amidst President Donald Trump's recently imposed tariffs, Trump's semi-serious demands for Canada to become America's 51st state, and the election of liberal Prime Minister Mark Carney. As a result of the rising tensions, leaders Trump and Carney met in Washington, DC on May 6 to discuss the future of diplomacy between the neighboring countries.



MONEYMAKER: Mark Carney presents at the annual World Economic Forum.

Trump's election and subsequent policies piqued the interest of the Canadian people and their government. The president's tariffs, integral to his campaign and economic plan, threatened to impact

trade between Canada and the United States. According to a White House statement published in February, the US government planned to place a 25 percent tariff on Canadian goods to address what the Trump administration has declared a "national emergency." When this plan initially emerged, former Prime Minister Justin Trudeau responded while serving his final week in office and accused Trump of sparking a "trade war" with Canada. Trudeau's response echoed the sentiment of many Canadians and some American liberals, especially amidst Trump's repeated claims that Canada could become America's 51st state. These claims affronted some Canadians, including Trudeau and Canada's Liberal Party, as they saw Trump's statements as a threat to their sovereignty and economic freedoms. Although some Americans and Canadian citizens have ignored or embraced the idea of America's absorption of Canada, it nonetheless created tension between the two nations and within the each nation's political parties.

After Trudeau announced his resignation on Jan. 6, Canada's Liberal Party held elections for the new prime minister. The party elected candidate Mark Carney, who ran on a platform of vocal opposition to Trump's actions towards Canada. He was sworn into office on Mar. 14. Following Trudeau, Carney had to address the ambiguous situation of Canadian-US diplomacy. On May 6, Carney and Trump convened in the White House Oval Office for a conference to discuss future relations between the two countries. At the meeting, while Trump affirmed that he would maintain tariffs on Canada, he somewhat strayed away from asserting that Canada should become an American state, saying,

"It takes two to tango," referring to Canada's widespread opposition to his idea. Carney asserted that Canada is "not for sale." Whereupon Trump countered, "Never say never." While the meeting prompted little change, it was a chance for Carney to further establish himself as a resistor to Trump's policy changes towards Canada and introduce himself to the American people.

Since the elections earlier this year, the US and Canada have starkly different leaders: one conservative and prioritizing the domestic economy, and the other liberal and encouraging global trade. With the economy and sovereignty on the line, tensions between the two countries have yet to decline. (Sources: AP, BBC, NPR, The White House)



DIPLOMACY: Former Prime Minister Trudeau and Trump meet at conference.

Qatar’s government gifts aircraft to President Trump

by Dylan Wadhwa
Opinion Editor

A new plan by the Trump administration to accept a lavish Boeing 747-8 aircraft from the government of Qatar for temporary use as part of “Air Force One” has caused a debate among lawmakers and legal experts. The aircraft, reportedly worth around 400 million dollars, is among the most expensive foreign gifts ever proposed to the US government and is set to be transferred to Donald Trump’s presidential library.



SAY HI: Trump disembarks from an aircraft in front of journalists.

The Qatar government could donate the jet to the US Department of Defense, modified with security features, and used as a substitute Air Force One due to repeated delays in Boeing’s ongoing

efforts to deliver new presidential planes. The decision, however, raises many questions, specifically regarding whether Trump will be allowed to use the plane after his presidential term.

President Trump addressed the controversy in a social media post May 11, claiming the Democrats were criticizing what he described as a “gift” to the American taxpayer. Trump wrote, “The Defense Department is getting a GIFT, FREE OF CHARGE...The Dems are World Class Losers!”

The White House and Trump administration insisted the proposal remains within legal boundaries. “Any gift given by a foreign government is always accepted in full compliance with all applicable laws,” according to Karoline Leavitt, the White House Press Secretary.

Many who oppose this decision argue that the arrangement revives unresolved concerns surrounding Trump’s business dealings and the constitutional implications that come with it, which prohibits US officials from accepting gifts from foreign governments without congressional approval, if over a certain amount.

Democratic lawmakers have voiced their disapproval as well. Senator Adam Schiff, who led the first impeachment effort against Trump, described the deal as “brazen corruption.” Representative Jamie Raskin from Maryland added to the sentiment, saying that the Constitution prevents accepting such gifts without congressional approval. Moreover, many people speculate that the message of this arrangement is clear: Qatar wants America to continue to buy oil from them, despite Trump’s recent efforts to make America more self-sufficient.

Qatari officials, however, have attempted to downplay the arrangement. A spokesman for Qatar’s Ministry of Defense stated that the potential transfer of the aircraft is still under review by legal departments and that no definitive agreement has been reached.

Government lawyers reportedly advised against the original proposal, which would have transferred the jet directly to Trump’s library for active use while he remained in office, saying such a move would violate the Constitution. The new version, where the government uses the plane temporarily before donating it to the library, may offer a legal loophole, but still raises red flags for those concerned about the legality of the whole situation. As the plan continues to face legal reviews and public scrutiny, who knows whether Trump’s actions will be seen as corrupt or simply as accepting a gift.

(Sources: CNN, NBC, NY Times, X)



FASTEN YOUR SEATBELTS: President Trump’s jet prepares for takeoff.

Afrikaner refugees harbored

by Julia Valencia
People Editor

On May 12, 59 Afrikaners, white South Africans who were the ruling ethnic group during apartheid, arrived in the United States, despite a policy implemented by President Trump at the start of his second term that completely halted refugee admissions.

The South Africans who arrived said that other South Africans were discriminating against them and that they were subjected to violence in South Africa due to their race. In an interview, President Trump said that in South Africa, “Farmers are being killed... They happen to be white. Whether they are white or Black makes no difference to me. White farmers are being brutally killed, and the land is being confiscated in South Africa.” Contrary to the claims of President Trump as well as some refugees, South African police data does not substantiate their allegations. They insist that between April 2020 and March 2024, 225 people, both black and white, were killed on farms, a number that does not align with President Trump’s claims of mass genocide of white farmers in South Africa.



STAND TALL: President Trump overlooks an audience.

Critics argue that though there are tens of thousands of refugees from all around the world who are in the process of getting the go-ahead to come to the United States, they have all been put on pause while the Trump administration focuses on a way to bring white South Africans, the majority of whom were in less dire situations than many other refugee applicants, to the United States. Most people have to go through a multi-year process for the US to approve their refugee status, yet President Trump’s administration approved the Afrikaners’ applications in just three months. President Trump said that the United States has “essentially extended citizenship” to the group of Afrikaners.

The US State Department has created a new refugee program for South Africans, which applies to all racial minorities in the country, and this program has only increased tensions between South Africa and the United States. According to the NY Times, the South African government has repeatedly rejected the Trump administration’s claim that “the Afrikaners should be eligible for refugee status.”

Not only do white South Africans continue to dominate the land ownership throughout South Africa, three decades after the end of apartheid, they are also employed at much higher rates than black South Africans and suffer from poverty at a much lower rate. Chrispin Phiri, a representative for South Africa’s Foreign Ministry, said, “It is most regrettable that it appears that the resettlement of South Africans to the United States under the guise of being ‘refugees’ is entirely politically motivated and designed to question South Africa’s constitutional democracy.”

As questions arise about not only the fairness but also the intent behind these decisions, the situation spotlights a broader debate about race and privilege in the selective application of US immigration.

(Sources: CNN, NBC, NY Times)

Virginia man shoots teens

by Quinn Hathaway
National/World Editor

A Virginian homeowner shot two teenage boys during the early hours of May 3. Several teenage boys were filming a TikTok involving “ding dong ditching,” the act of ringing a doorbell or knocking on a door and then fleeing the scene before the owners of the house emerge. The shooting occurred in Spotsylvania, Virginia, a town located approximately 60 miles outside of Washington, DC. The Spotsylvania County Sheriff’s office disclosed information in a news release on Facebook, stating that the shooting happened at 3:00 AM and deputies arrived at a location near McKenzie Lane following a report to the office.



FLASH: A picture captures part of Spotsylvania.

The officers found three teenagers at the scene, two of whom had gunshot wounds and a third of whom was unharmed. The authorities immediately transported both of the injured boys to the local hospital, and one of the two, Michael Bosworth Jr., later died of his wounds.

Doctors treated the other boy for less severe injuries. Bosworth Jr. was 18, and the other friends he was with were both under 18. According to an affidavit from one of the boys, the trio had been running around an unfamiliar neighborhood and doing the “ding dong ditch” TikTok prank on several residences. However, a video released from one of Butler’s neighbors shows the boys aggravating the garage door, kicking, banging, and slamming the door until the man emerged from the house.

Tyler Chase Butler, the 27-year-old Spotsylvanian homeowner who shot the teens, testified that the boys were attempting to break into his house on Saturday. Butler is currently being held at Rappahannock Regional Jail on charges of second-degree murder, malicious wounding, and use of a firearm to commit a felony. Butler has no bond, but a preliminary hearing has been set for May 18. The investigation remains ongoing, and no verdict has been reached.

Some of the TikTok pranks that have gone viral in recent years have proven to be harmful to the overall community, such as the “devious lick” challenge, which showcased participants vandalizing and destroying public properties. The “ding dong ditch” prank is supposedly harmless, but the events of May 3 have demonstrated the worst-case scenario.

Bosworth Jr. attended Massaponax High School, located in Fredericksburg, Virginia. The high school is in a state of mourning, with students hosting memorial efforts for Bosworth Jr. The school district stated in a letter, “School counselors will be on site at the event to provide support as needed. Also, when students return to school on [May 5], our counseling staff and additional division support team members will be available to provide support to our students and staff as needed. If your child needs support, please contact the school so that we can provide assistance. Our thoughts are with the family during this difficult time.”

(Sources: ABC, NBC, NY Times, USA Today)

President Trump announces new federal victory holidays

by Annabelle Pan
Graphics Editor

On May 5, President Donald Trump declared on Truth Social that the United States would have two new federal holidays commemorating the victories of World War I and World War II. In his post, he announced, “We won two World Wars, but we never took credit for it -- Everyone else does! All over the World, the Allies are celebrating the Victory we had in World War II. The only Country that doesn’t celebrate is the United States of America, and the Victory was only accomplished because of us.” Trump’s social media post does not make these two holidays official since there is no accompanying executive order, and the ability to create federal holidays requires congressional approval.

Trump’s post voiced a different reason and motivation behind World War I compared to previous speeches by his predecessors. In 1926 at the dedication of the Liberty Memorial in Missouri, President Calvin Coolidge stated that the monument did not celebrate war and victory, but rather the peace and liberty achieved by the results. In 1954, President Dwight D. Eisenhower similarly placed importance on peace and liberty when he renamed Armistice Day to Veterans Day.

Americans celebrate Veterans Day, a federal holiday, on Nov. 11 to honor and thank those who serve our country, but Trump wants to rename Veterans Day to Victory Day in World War I. This day would celebrate the end of World War I on Nov. 11, 1918, with the signing of

the Armistice by the Allies, represented by France and Great Britain, and Germany. He also wants to name May 8 as Victory Day for World War II, marking the formal end to the world war with Germany’s surrender in 1945. Some countries celebrate Victory in Europe Day, VE Day, on May 8, but it is not a federal holiday in the United States. Additionally, Trump’s announcement does not automatically grant a day off from school or work. In his post, Trump mentioned that he would not close the US for these two holidays because “we already have too many Holidays in America” and there “are not enough days left in the year.”



TRIBUTE: The President and First Lady honor World War I and II veterans.

Trump’s announcement faced resistance from multiple groups. The Disabled American Veterans service organization, DAV, responded to Trump’s announcements with a simple “No.” Other veteran service organizations are slowly following the DAV’s lead in challenging Trump. Senator Richard Blumenthal, a member of the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee, stated that Trump missed the point of Veterans Day and argued to preserve “this important holiday.” The Veterans of Foreign Wars reached out to the White House for clarification and were satisfied when White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt posted, “We will always honor Veterans Day, and we should commemorate the end of WWI and WWII as victory days.” Leavitt’s post established confidence that Trump’s announcement would not result in the removal of Veterans Day.

The White House has decided to keep the holiday name for Nov. 11 as Veterans Day while adding a proclamation celebrating the victory in World War I. There will be a similar proclamation on May 8, but it will not override VE Day. Neither of President Trump’s proposed holidays became a federal holiday, but they will be officially announced and celebrated without overriding previous holidays. Trump additionally signed a proclamation on May 6 to designate May 8 as Victory Day for World War II and expects to sign a similar proclamation celebrating World War I later this year.

(Sources: AP News, BBC, Military.com, USA Today)

- El Gato seniors share the best advice from their time at LGHS

SENIOR WISDOM

EL GATO • WEDNESDAY, MAY 28, 2025 • LOS GATOS HIGH SCHOOL • WWW.ELGATONEWS.COM



Owen Fugit

please do yourself a favor and just say yes.



Ainsley Northrop

watch them thrive. As a result, I've grown so much closer to and gained so much respect for those around me.



Katie Nelson

fail again, laugh at yourself, cry, dance with your friends in the senior parking lot, take a class you're interested in, go to your teacher's Zumba classes, meet new people, go to football games, try a new sport, endure, succeed, scream song lyrics in the car, take risks, make mistakes, and learn from them. But just keep going. I would say it gets easier as you go, but it's really a roller coaster ride of ups and downs and everything in between. Simply make the most of everything. I've realized life is not about finding ways to ease the struggle. It's about managing to have fun amidst it.



Rory Zeman



Emery Curtis

Say yes to more things. If I've learned anything in high school, it is that the most fun experiences come from saying yes, especially when you don't want to. It is so easy to decline an opportunity that may sound uncomfortable or new, but please understand that those experiences often turn out to be more enjoyable than the comfortable hangouts you have with friends. And don't wait around for an event to come up; actively seek out things to say yes to. From course selection to extracurricular activities to pure entertainment when you hang out with friends,

Some of my favorite high school memories have been spent going to things on campus that I had no clue were happening until moments before. So now as a senior, I can confidently advise you to go to random school events. Attend the swim meets, talent shows, basketball games, and dog days on the front lawn. Go to the plays, concerts, and leadership's lunchtime activities. Not only will you get a much needed study break, you will get to learn about your peers and

Sometimes, high school gets hard. There's no denying that. There were times I thought the schoolwork would never end, my grades would never go up, and graduation would never come. Yet no matter how hard it may be, when you look back on high school, the bad stuff and late nights won't be the first things that come to mind. When I look back, I think of tearful embraces at the end of water polo senior night, driving to the beach with my friends, late nights in El Gato, running through the sprinklers at my friend's house, spirit weeks, and rally days. There's no way to get around the hardships that will come with high school, so face them head-on: try, fail,

The stereotypical senior wisdom falls along the lines of "do what makes you happy." However, I ask the question: how do you know what really makes you happy if you keep doing the things you think make you happy? There's no real way to label something as your favorite activity if you haven't tried the alternatives. Join a weird club, start a niche hobby, or listen to a completely new music genre. Your number one priority should be building an authentic personality. Why wait until college to discover yourself when you can do it right now? Embrace the things you find weird, below, or even above you. To end on a cliché yet universally true metaphor of the persona: the puzzles with the most pieces are the most complex.

Nobody really cares. All throughout high school, I was so afraid of being judged. I jumped on every micro trend, only went to events if others were going, and kept my real interests hidden. Looking back at these past four years, I wish I had realized the truth sooner: no one actually cares. Everyone is too focused on their own lives and are too worried about being judged themselves. After all of this, you'll probably never see these people again, so do what makes you happy. Be around people who genuinely like you for you and don't waste your time trying to fit in. It's not worth it, and trust me you'll regret it.

Start by starting. If there's something you want to do, just do it. Find what's meaningful to you by dedicating your time to something you are truly interested in, not what is expected of you. Even if a certain idea or topic doesn't catch your attention at first, try out as many new experiences as you can. Take the intimidating class, join the new activity, or meet new people. While this may seem scary, always attempt to do more than you think you can handle. You would be surprised by how much you can adapt. I've never regretted putting too much on my plate because it made me grow as a person, but I have regretted not challenging myself.



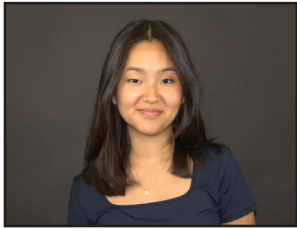
Lucy Panicacci



Margo Rawlings



Katie Borders



Aliya Koshalieva



Megan Hastings

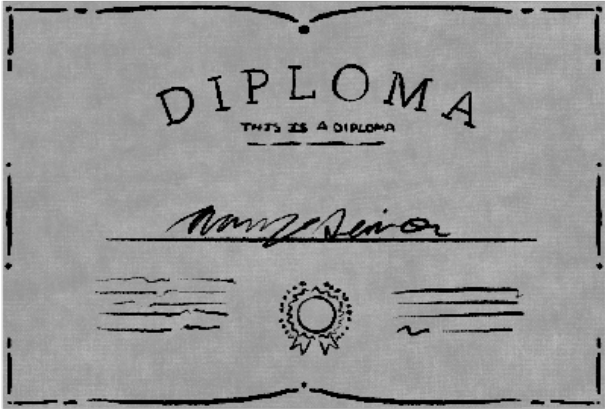
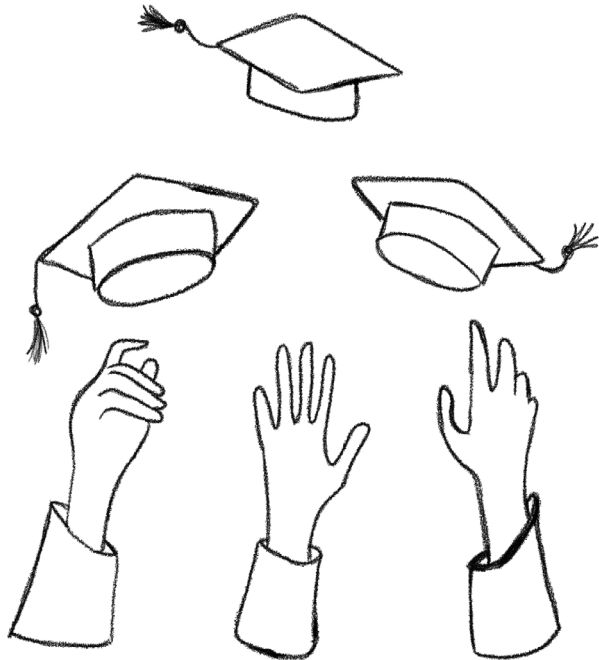
Reflecting on senior year, the best advice I can offer is to live in the moment. Do not allow yourself to follow the same routine every day to where it feels like you're just going through the same motions over and over. Take your friends up on last-minute plans. Sign up for a new club. Try a sport you've never played before. Take a class you know nothing about. Don't be afraid to try new things.

No matter what activities you're involved in, don't take the time you have for granted. Live in the moment every day. Cherish your friends, family, and community because high school goes by in high school goes by in the blink of an eye!

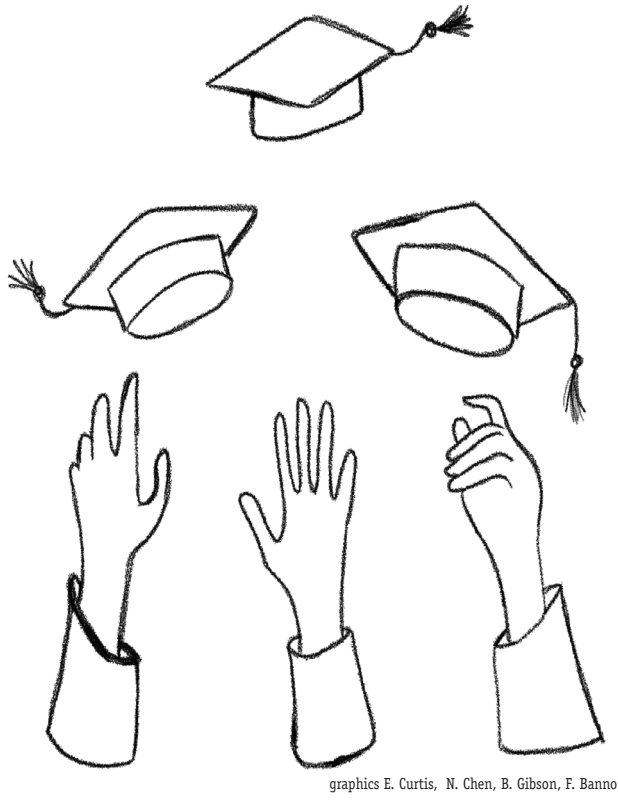
It's not too late to try new experiences during your last year of high school. Regardless of whether you are the senior who cannot wait to get out of high school and experience the independence and newfound freedoms of college or if you are the senior who does not want senior year to end, you have the power to choose your mindset heading into senior year. Be open to trying new things, don't be afraid to look silly in front of others or take that risk, spend time with your friends, maintain a balance between your school work and social life, and participate in all the senior traditions. Trust me, you will look back with nostalgia. So, be brave, be bold, and go for it!

Ever since I started high school, I couldn't wait to make it to winter and summer break, and I would find myself racing to the finish line. Then, all of a sudden, I started crying all the time because I realized this was my last year of school with my best friends. I regretted fantasizing about graduating and leaving when I should have been treasuring every moment. The most important thing I tell underclassmen is to step back and embrace the present. You think that a random tutorial with your friends won't matter, but ten years later, the most important thing is that you were in the moment with your friends, making memories.

Although I'm sure you're tired of hearing older students give you the same speech about how "having fun matters as much as good grades," I can assure you that they're right. When you die, your SAT score won't be printed on your gravestone. No one will mention your GPA when you get married. However, as a fellow try-hard, I know it's far from impossible to have late nights studying AND late nights with friends. Just make sure to savor every tear and smile because it goes too fast. Also, if you're not enjoying your high school experience, take the initiative to change things.



Class of 2025



- El Gatos urges LGHS students to learn about town history

LGHS students should learn more of Los Gatos’s history

by **Emery Curtis, Katie Nelson, and Lucy Panicacci**
Graphics Editor, Center Editor, and Editor-in-Chief

We all understand the importance of history. History expresses the events of the past, teaching us about where we came from. It depicts shifts in culture and society, it brings honor to those before us, and it helps us confront the future. Formally established in 1887, Los Gatos comes with its own rich history. While historians and residents document some of this history with the New Museum of Los Gatos’s history exhibits, a significant part of LG history comes from word of mouth – people sharing their personal experiences. These stories give direct insight into the ordinary day-to-day lives of people, shining a light on interesting or obscure moments that paper and pen could not capture. For their own enrichment and enlightenment, students should seek to learn more about the town of Los Gatos.

LG resident **Galen Chesarek** graduated from Los Gatos High School in 1987. She remembered LGHS for its laid-back atmosphere. Chesarek explained, “Back then, we were free range chickens basically. If you watch any movie from the 80s, like where are the parents?” Expressing this carefree spirit, Chesarek recalled relaxing on the front lawn with her friends during lunch: “I had a really big speaker system in my Mustang... and we would open the back and just crank the music and bring out our beach chairs.” After school, she would often go to Santa Cruz because, ultimately, she found that there wasn’t much to do in LG. This lack of teen-oriented activities contributed to the wild behavior of students at the time; every two weeks, the Moms Against Drunk Driving program would place the wrecked car of a student’s drunk driving accident on the front lawn. Trying to create a safe place for teens, Chesarek proposed an idea to the town: “We all came up with a plan to open a 50s style diner with all kinds of arcade games and stuff... keep it clean there, but a place you could comfortably go and hang out because there was nothing. [The town council] shot us down. We had a business plan and financial planning, and they wouldn’t let us do it.”

Chesarek said that almost all students participated in school events. “Prom, you always went with a date, and it was a big deal going out to a nice dinner before, [such as] Shadowbrook,” she recalled.

Chesarek continued, “We loved to dance and [listen to] music... we would dance until we dropped and stay at dances all night long.” After senior sneak day, the seniors would all sleep on the front lawn. This was a tradition for many years until a student in Chesarek’s class set off a pipe bomb, causing serious, permanent injuries to a fellow student. Despite this craziness, Chesarek felt like school had more of a balance: “You totally find your happy medium... those of us who wanted to study hard and move forward in our future could... We also had downtime to just be kids and relax. I feel like nobody gets that anymore.”

Lisa McAdams is the speech and language specialist at LGHS and has been a Los Gatos resident for over 25 years. She explained that she feels like LG is losing its small town feel, and the lack of community engagement has only exacerbated that: “I feel like we need to do a better job of community activities especially geared toward high school [and] middle school to give [them] more options of things to do and a greater sense of community as well.” One example McAdams elaborated on is volunteer work, as it can be “really important to get a sense to see what’s out there and what we can do as adults and as students to learn about the community and be more involved.”

McAdams said that at the core of school and town pride is our history and feels that people need to take more time to reflect on who came before. There are so many amazing people that have done incredible things that graduated from this school and recognizing them can inspire a shared pride that can motivate students and foster a greater sense of school spirit. For example, McAdams talked about LG alum **Mark Bingham**, who was one of two people who stormed the cockpit of United Flight 93 on September 11, 2001, crashing the plane in rural Pennsylvania to avoid an attack that could have ended tens of thousands of lives. She said, “I think it would be really cool if, say, at

the beginning of every year, either history teachers or English teachers or somebody talks to students about why we should take pride in our school. Who’s come before? Mark Bingham is a fabulous example of a Los Gatos alum who was on the flight to Pennsylvania during 9/11, and he was one of the two that got the passengers together and... managed to overcome the hijacker.”

She added that a great way to honor these people is through awards and scholarships in their name, explaining, “Recognizing students for what they’ve accomplished or what they’ve done and tying it to some sort of historical aspect of our high school is a really great thing. And I think those kinds of things need to be celebrated.” McAdams pointed out that somewhere to start could be the main hall trophy case that has sat empty this year without a display, which she described as “very sterile [and] very sad.” She added: “I would love it if there were a group of students who would like to bring some of the history back to our main hall.”

McAdams also had some entertaining stories from the past, including one of a substitute teacher nearly electrocuting themselves in the late 1990s. The sub knocked over a coffee cup, which fell into a power strip, and he tried to remove it using metal scissors, which set fire to the scissors and led to the fire department arriving soon after. She also added a story about how an old principal did three backflips in succession on the Fractured Follies stage in 2013. Stories like these will never be in any history books or museums, but these funny and memorable moments define LGHS. McAdams concluded, “If we don’t know our history, how can we have pride in where we are now, and how can we have a vision of what we hope to become? History is super important. So I would love to bring that history back to our high school for all students to see and ask questions about.”

The decrease in the community around Los Gatos is another concern. Julia Lombardi, a teacher at Lexington

Elementary School, worries that Los Gatos is no longer the small town she grew up in. The sense of community that Los Gatos had was an aspect Lombardi missed. One of her most vivid memories is from Oct. 17, 1989, the day the Loma Prieta earthquake struck. What stood out to her the most was the town’s effort: “Everyone just showed up,” she said. “People brought food, helped clear debris, and checked on neighbors. It wasn’t even a question, we just did it.” Another moment Lombardi remembers is the night her neighbor’s house caught fire. She remembers the rush of people with hoses and buckets, and the collective effort to contain the flames until firefighters arrived. “We were just all there for each other, everyone had each other’s backs.”

Today, though, Lombardi says the town she once knew feels more distant. “I used to walk downtown and be greeted left and right. Now I barely see anyone out and about,” she said. “It’s like the soul of the town is missing.” Recalling how Los Gatos used to be a more lively place, Lombardi talked about Brazil’s winning the World Cup in 1994 that led Los Gatos to open its streets to celebrate: “It put us on the map overnight. Suddenly, people knew where Los Gatos was. It was exciting then to have so many people come together, but it’s definitely when things changed.” Since then, Lombardi has observed that this new wave of newcomers has transformed the once-close town. It isn’t just all of the new people; it’s the shops, too: “The small shops and local businesses we all loved? They’re mostly gone. Replaced by high-end chains and stores that don’t even try to feel local.” Lombardi recalls a candy store she and her siblings used to run to after church and how she wishes there was someplace like that still in town. Lombardi added, “There was a pizza place everyone would go to after football games and a clothing store all of my friends would shop at. Both are now gone.”

History comes in many forms: whether telling crazy stories of past experiences, celebrating alumni that came before, or learning about the history of how our school came to be, tradition is an integral part of LGHS. LGHS prides itself on school spirit, and cherishing these stories and sharing them helps preserve and maintain this pride. As the school year comes to a close and fun activities and traditions ensue, we can reflect on the value of preserving them and take initiative in being students who make new fun memories and traditions with our school community.



F. Banno



E. Curtis

ROAD	PLATE	GLYPH	KITE
WHEEL	FLIP	SEA	SWALLOW
SYMBOL	CHARACTER	RUBBER	MIRROR
CRANE	BLIND	LETTER	DUCK

Answers: (Writings) - Character, Glyph, Letter, Symbol (Car Components) - Mirror, Flip, Plate, Rubber, Wheel (Bird Homonyms) - Crane, Duck, Kite, Swallow (Side) - Blind, Flip, Road, Sea



EL GATO

Los Gatos High School
Los Gatos, CA 95030

20 High School Court
(408)-354-2730

Editors-in-Chief
Ainsley Northrop
Lucy Panicacci
Margo Rawlings
Owen Fugit

Advisor
Paris DeSoto
pdesoto@lgsuhsd.org
Any Questions?
lghselgatochiefs@gmail.com

News Editors Hayley Strahs Siyona Singhal Kat Littfin	Opinion Editors Sam Gruetter Dylan Wadhwa	Culture Editors Megan Saul Claudia Casal	Media Production Editors Aliya Koshalieva Rory Zeman Kayla Mitchell	Public Relations Managers Megan Hastings Jane Wilde
National and World Editors Katie Borders Quinn Hathaway Atharava Pandey	People Editors Isabella Langner Julia Valencia	Humor Editors Nelson Kramer Chloe Wilson	Sports Editors Jordan Park Sahil Muthukrishnan Britt Melinauskas	Graphics Editors Emery Curtis Annabelle Pan Fuyu Banno
Center Editor Katie Nelson	Editorial Editor Kloe Adams			

El Gato is an independently-funded publication of the journalism program at Los Gatos High School. Editorials reflect the majority opinion of the staff. El Gato is an open forum for the exchange of ideas and welcomes signed letters and e-mail. Names can be withheld upon request. All stories, graphics, and layout are done by El Gato staff. We reserve the right to refuse ad contracts.

Subscriber \$30, Patron \$75, Sponsor \$120.

Northrop argues for mandatory community service

by Ainsley Northrop
Editor-in-Chief



Across the United States, schools vary in their policies regarding community service. While many schools deem service hours voluntary, some require students to complete a certain number of hours prior to graduation. Community service provides students with real-life experience and empathy, and schools should prioritize and incentivize such service, not just off campus, but within their curricula.

In 1993, Maryland became the only state to mandate that all students complete 75 service hours to graduate. Former Lieutenant Governor of Maryland Kathleen Kennedy Townsend explained, “Children aren’t born knowing how to be citizens. Like learning to read or add or throw a ball, citizenship is something that should be taught and nurtured in school.” By incorporating volunteer work into its school’s policies, the state guarantees each student real-life experience, which enhances students’ social awareness.

Volunteerism benefits not only the public but also the volunteers. According to the Mayo Clinic, people who volunteer typically experience improved physical and mental health, gain an increased

sense of purpose, and create new relationships. Furthermore, a Corporation for National and Community Service study found that unemployed volunteers are 27 percent more likely to secure a job by the end of the year than non-volunteers. This is largely because volunteering builds both social and human capital; by serving those around them, volunteers can gain skills and meet new people.

Furthermore, volunteering can provide individuals insight into prospective careers and even make it more likely for them to secure a job. For example, as the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC) explained, volunteer work can help prospective doctors become more “knowledgeable about the health care needs in [a] community and gain exposure to the delivery of health care in various environments.” The AAMC declared volunteering one of the best ways for medical students to increase their chances of employment. Likewise, Georgetown Center for Education and the Workforce Associate Director Kathryn Campbell deemed volunteering a “low-risk way of figuring out what skills students have and want to apply in the real world.”

My experience volunteering at Good Samaritan Hospital and through the National Charity League throughout high school has arguably taught me lessons just as valuable as those taught in school. Playing bingo with the elderly, serving the food insecure at Sacred Heart, wheeling patients out of the hospital, and so much more, I have built empathy, patience, and gratitude. I have also realized that I want to continue working at a hospital in the future. I am who I am today largely because of my community service.

At Los Gatos High School, community service is voluntary, so many students contribute minimal service hours. While it may not be plausible to require hours here, it is certainly possible to incentivize it. Similar to schools like Archbishop Mitty, which provides community service trips linked to class curricula, LGHS should create and publicize more opportunities for students to volunteer and connect what they learn in class to helping the community. By prioritizing volunteerism, LGHS can better prepare students for their futures.

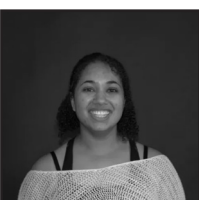
(Sources: AAMC, Corporation for National and Community Service, LGHS.net, Mayo Clinic, US News, Walden University)



E. Curtis

Study during the summer

by Hayley Strahs
News Editor



When school’s out and the sun’s overhead, studying probably isn’t at the forefront of your mind. After all, summer vacation is supposed to be a break from school, not an extension of it, right? The words “summer school” often evoke the same picture in students’ minds: mind-numbing lectures in sweaty classrooms to avoid at all costs. Nevertheless, whether it’s structured courses through the district or Khan Academy videos, education doesn’t have to — and shouldn’t — pause for the summer.

Even if students have vacations, jobs, and summer camps, chances are that their screen time still skyrockets every June. Simply put, losing six hours of school means gaining six hours of emptiness. With nothing to do, many kids fall down the doom-scrolling rabbit hole and double their screen time. Even with a theater production, a job, and a volunteer position, I often spent over eight hours per day on my phone, most of which came from TikTok and Instagram. Unless you have the willpower of a monk, letting your summer slowly wither away is tempting, so why not put your time to good use? Even 15 minutes per day of studying amounts to 17 hours over the entire summer and can make a noticeable difference without detracting from free time.

When August hits, classes often spend time going over past years’ concepts; in fact, the entire first semester of AP Calculus BC at LGHS is a repeat of Calculus AB. Particularly in classes that directly build upon previous levels — math, language, English, to name a few — studying key takeaways from previous lessons provides

students with better foundations heading into a new set of courses. Keeping your mind sharp and studying during summer break allows you to get ahead, take it easy, or shift your attention to other endeavors during these review periods. For instance, kids taking the SAT in August or October may benefit from extra study time during the school year. Moreover, to maximize your hours during the school year, opting to take the ACT in June or July can give you more time to study for — or knock out — college readiness test requirements before the school year even starts.

Furthering your education over the summer doesn’t have to be difficult or expensive. LGHS offers concurrent enrollment options with six local community colleges that offer courses across a range of disciplines. Whether you’re interested in strengthening your math skills or learning how to paint with oils, there are countless local opportunities available. If a certain course didn’t go your way this semester, or if you need an in-depth review, Los Gatos-Saratoga Union High School District summer school allows students to recover missing credits and relearn any difficult concepts. For self-guided options, sites like Khan Academy, Quizlet, and Knowt have free flashcards and practice tests in almost every academic subject, while platforms such as Outschool, Skillshare, and Albert.io have paid resources that go more in-depth.

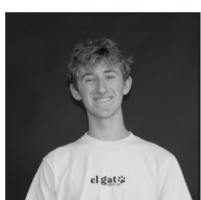
While studying over the summer might not be the most exciting aspect of your break, utilizing local and online resources to practice old concepts or hone new ones will help you in the long run. Once the fall semester arrives, you’ll be able to breathe in your advanced classes with the knowledge that your hard work over the summer paid off.



F. Banno

Education should use films

by Owen Fugit
Editor-in-Chief



Today, society regards movies as vessels for entertainment, not enlightenment. We ignore the fact that many movies and TV shows are produced to comment on an issue or topic that may be hard to describe otherwise. We must give movies the credit they deserve, not just as entertainment pieces but as art installations with inherent educational value as well.

To do this, we must begin to teach film analysis in high schools.

While there are hundreds of movies that exist in the cultural mainstream as pure entertainment, most movies, just like most literature, possess critical depth that offers themes and ideas that audiences might not consider entertaining outright. Taking Star Wars III as an example, the movie is full of action-packed sequences featuring starfighter chases, duels on volcanic planets, and even a full-scale invasion of an alien world. But buried among these dramatic moments is a plot about the fall of a republic and the seizure of power by one individual. We also witness manipulation and grief, and I would argue that it is this storyline that makes the movie so interesting and so relevant today.

Most texts in high school English classes speak to similar themes. Ideas of power, control,

personal values versus the values of a society, and so much more. Think about Albert Camus’s magnum opus, The Stranger, the fictional story of a man who refused to conform to society. We spent a month reading, analyzing, discussing, and writing about this book in my AP Literature class. But for some reason, films have yet to find their way into our English classes in any meaningful way. Students spend months learning to analyze poetry and its devices, even learning how the shape of stanzas can contribute to a poem’s message. Why do we not analyze films with this level of scrutiny? Observing the positioning of the camera, analyzing the audio cues, and paying close attention to how dialogue and action contradict are all strategies students must learn because we encounter these things every day.

For a medium that holds so much power and influence on popular culture and student interests, it is concerning that we do not study film with the same effort as literature. There are hundreds of thousands of movies to analyze, from Star Wars to Sinners and everything in between. If we want students to be prepared for life after high school, teaching them critical analysis of film is sure to set them on a path to recognize rhetoric, satire, emotion, and intention in ways that classical literature simply cannot teach. English teachers must work to incorporate film into their curricula, not as supplements to other works, but as the works themselves.

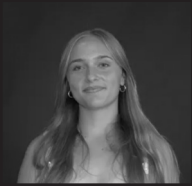
(Sources: Chicago Academy for the Arts, CRHS News, The English Journal, The Guardian, PHS Journal, The Week)



A. Pan

Littfin claims English classes should include more reading

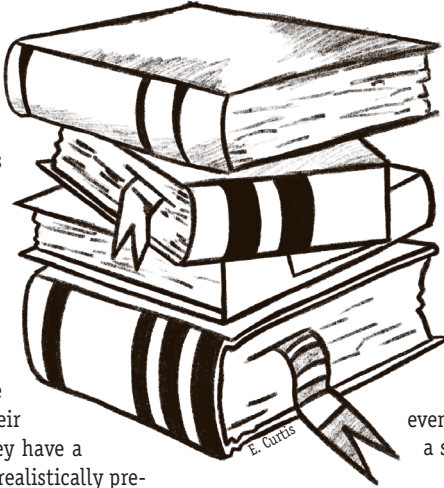
by Kat Littfin
News Editor



An Atlantic article published late last year garnered national attention with its title, The Elite College Students Who Can’t Read Books. The article describes Columbia Literature Humanities professor Nicholas Dames’s recent realization that many of his students do not read the books they are assigned. Perhaps the prevalence of websites that summarize popular books or teens’ increasingly short attention spans due to social media are to blame. However, Dames argues that teachers simply did not assign books for their students to read in their middle school and high school classes. As a product of LGHS’s Honors and AP English programs, I have had to read my fair share of books varying in length and content, but with a twin brother who has taken regular English classes, the difference between the advanced and regular English classes is glaringly obvious. Of course, there should be a difference between the two levels; however, the vast gap in the number and complexity of literature read in the separate sections puts the majority of Los Gatos English students at a disadvantage when it comes to higher education. Therefore, grade-level English classes should heighten their reading requirements to better prepare their students for college and to help them develop other valuable skills.

Going into my freshman year English class, I had already read three books for summer reading. By the end of the school year, I had read at least ten books. In contrast, my brother did not have to read any books. For the 2025-26 academic year, the English department will no longer offer English 9 Honors as an option for incoming freshmen. While there is clearly rationale behind this decision, it likely means students’ required reading in their freshman year will be much lower than previous English 9 Honors students had. Entry-level college English classes vary in the number of books they require their students to read, but typically they have a minimum of two to four books. To realistically prepare their students for college, grade-level English classes should assign their students a similar number of full-length books.

More assigned reading not only allows students to be better prepared for their college classes, but it also helps them develop skills that can aid them in high school and outside of their academic



E. Curtis

paths. Reading takes practice. Being able to focus on and analyze information for long periods is not a talent that many students in the age of social media possess, but many classes that LGHS offers require that skill. Classes like AP European History and Honors Biology have information-heavy textbooks, and students are expected to read up to twenty dense pages a night. Balancing this reading with other classes is nearly impossible if students do not possess the reading stamina that can only be developed through consistently reading long books. Language and academic skills are not the only benefits of increased reading. Reading can also help students improve their mental health, as reading rather than spending extended time on screens can reduce stress, help with sleep, and stimulate the mind. A twelve-year-long study from the National Library of Medicine even found that those who read had improved cognition and a survival advantage over non-readers.

While students increasingly stray away from reading, college requirements have yet to change. To better prepare their students for their future academic careers and lives in general, English teachers should increase reading requirements in all of their courses, regardless of level.

(Source: The National Library of Medicine)

Rethink eating disorders

Boys should be more vulnerable

by Sam Gruetter
Opinion Editor

Rebecca Owens, DNP, MBA, MSN, RN-BC, reported that “80 percent of eating disorders go undetected or never receive treatment,” despite nearly 28.8 million people in the United States suffering from one. I believe the lack of treatment is a result of the methodology used to implement treatment, rather than a lack of resources or patients’ willingness to be treated. Oftentimes, doctors treat eating disorders extremely clinically, rather than sensitively, like many other mental health issues. Doctors, schools, and families of those affected should address treatments and discussions about eating disorders as though they are both mental and physical health issues, rather than just the latter.

The root of eating disorders is undoubtedly mental. However, in offices and clinical screenings, doctors rarely ask patients about their mental relationship with food and body weight. Instead, doctors tend to ask about explicit physical behaviors, including, “Have you starved yourself?” or “Have you ever made yourself throw up?” The blunt nature of these potential questions can often be off-putting to patients and does not prompt productive conversations about treatment. Leah Kuntz, a writer for the Psychiatric Times, reports that “92 percent of frontline clinicians [admitted] in hindsight to potentially missing an eating

disorder (ED) diagnosis.” In contrast, the World Health Organization reports that 66.66 percent of mental health illnesses go undiagnosed. The reason for many of these disorders flying under the radar is not their lack of severity, but instead the fact that doctors are approaching them as if they were a broken bone or some other physical ailment.

One way doctors can appropriately adjust their screenings for eating disorders is to reframe the language and questions they ask patients to assess their patients’ mental relationship with food. Patients will not recognize the obvious symptoms of an eating disorder, not wanting to acknowledge they have a problem, but instead may admit to behavioral patterns or thoughts that signal the presence of a disorder. Methods that help detect these patterns include the Sick, Control, One, Fat, Food (SCOFF) method, which asks a series of five questions related to one’s beliefs about food and the manifestation of those beliefs, instead of their physical actions towards eating. Kuntz reports that “studies show it is highly effective for potential or actual ED identification, particularly high mortality disorders (anorexia or bulimia), with good psychometric properties.”

Eating disorders are mental health illnesses and should be categorized as such, thus putting patients in the position to receive appropriate and effective treatment. While doctors should unquestionably monitor patients’ physical health, they should equally consider their mental health to prevent the disorder from worsening or relapsing. (Sources: Psychiatric Times, Turnbridge)

by Nelson Kramer
Humor Editor

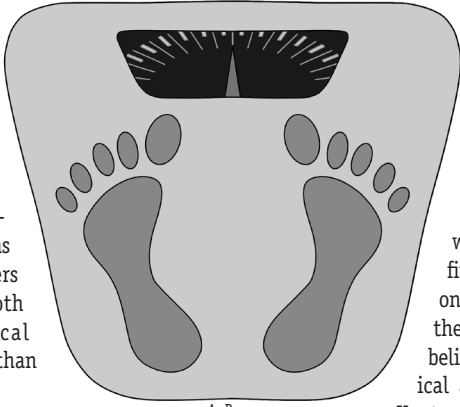
High school, particularly junior year, brings on a lot of stress and anxiety. Internalized questions, ranging from “How will I get this done?” or even “Am I good enough?” work my amygdala into overtime and leave me feeling defeated, scared, and paralyzed. One evening, it all caught up to me. Talking with my mom about my least favorite subjects — my grades and my future — the thing I dreaded most became real: I started to cry. I ran to my room and hid away; I felt vanquished by my feelings of embarrassment and vulnerability. As a result, I rendered myself unable to face my emotions, and I haven’t cried since. Why do boys open up less than girls? Hormones might account for some differences, but they don’t explain the shame I felt or why so many guys my age feel pressured to hide their tears. Research shows that boys are often conditioned from a young age to suppress emotions like sadness or fear. A Duke University study found that adolescent boys scored higher than girls on feeling shame when they cry, highlighting the internalized stigma around male vulnerability. If building a society of emotionally intelligent men is important because it fosters healthier relationships, deeper empathy, and a greater capacity for mutual respect, then we have to start teaching boys that being open, honest, and vulnerable isn’t a threat to their sense of self; it’s an essential part of it.

If “being a man about it” in today’s society means putting emotions aside, especially when

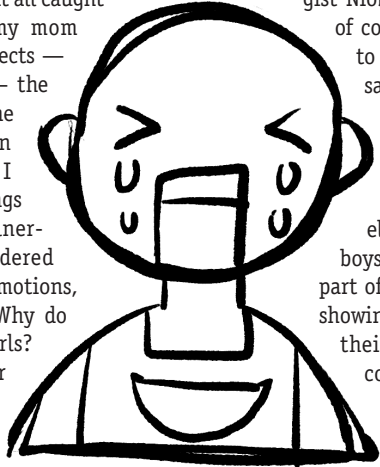
faced with difficult situations, why are we teaching young boys this harmful lesson? While no parental figure beat these words into my brain, many boys grow up in a comparable environment. Social conditioning to “be a man about it” has still shaped how I approach emotional expression in my relationships with others and myself. Society must make an effort to unteach these stereotypical social roles to children, as they inhibit the number of genuine emotions all human beings must allow themselves to feel for the sake of their wellbeing. Psychologist Niobe Way describes this as a “crisis of connection,” where boys, pressured to appear tough and unemotional, sacrifice deep friendships and emotional outlets as they grow older.

What do the steps forward look like? It can mean changes right at home with parents modeling emotional openness, teaching boys that having strong emotions is part of what it means to be human, and showing boys ways in which to navigate their intense feelings. Schools can continue to implement dedicated time to teach stress management and foster emotional intelligence in teens through social-emotional learning (SEL). Young men in particular need to be made aware of the harms associated with the traditional notions of masculinity, as these can damage mental health, stifle genuine passions and creativity, and hinder social connections.

To the me hiding under the covers, lost in tears from the shame of feeling exposed and disappointed in his inability to remain calm and in control; you were right where you needed to be in that moment, because after all the pressure, all the pretending, finally letting go was the bravest thing you could’ve done. (Sources: Express-News, Harvard GSE, Impact UPenn, Inner Explorer, Promising Futures, Pure, Santa Cruz COE)



A. Pan



F. Banno

Trump’s tariffs will soon begin to affect people’s day-to-day lives

Margo Rawlings
Editor-in-Chief

While the tariffs President Donald Trump promised to impose seemed like a far-off, abstract concept after his election last November, American consumers are beginning to feel their negative effects. Over the past few weeks, social media users have shared unreasonable duty fees added to their purchases from the popular swimsuit brand Triangl. The prices of items like the dolls and toys that Mattel manufactures have increased as well. And officials have predicted future increases in the prices of automobiles, imported alcohol, smartphones, technology, and other products like clothing that companies produce overseas. Although these tariffs don’t seem to be having their intended economic effects, they may help curb the rabid consumerism culture in the United States that supports fast fashion, unethical business practices, and prioritizes quantity over quality.

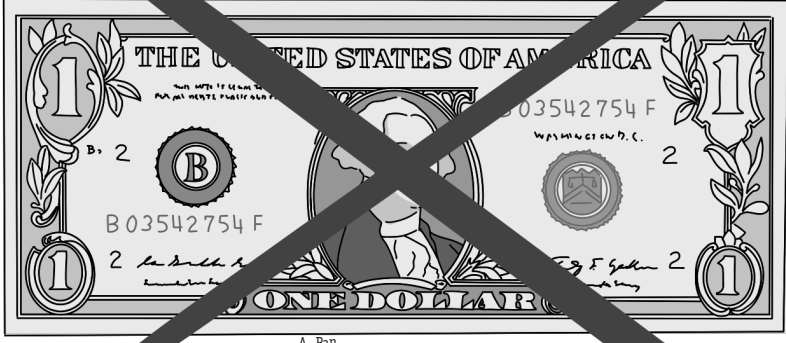
Last week, as I skimmed through pages and pages of swimsuits, looking to add a few to my collection for the summer, I was shocked to see the total cost at the bottom of my cart. I was in disbelief that two swimsuits could cost over 600 dollars, with more than 65 percent of the total charge coming from import duties.

The company even added an announcement to their website, signalling that the price increase came from new tariffs that the US government imposed. It’s safe to say I was uninterested in spending the 600 dollars. This experience allowed me to reflect on my consumer habits and ask myself if I really needed a new swimsuit when I already had more than I could count. While it’s certainly frustrating to see prices rising from arbitrary actions, I do believe these increases will encourage Americans to be more reflective about their spending habits. By being more conscious of where they spend their money, individuals may opt out of quickly fleeting trends and unnecessary spending and instead focus on buying only essential items.

In the long term, Trump’s tariffs are meant to bolster the production of US products on US soil rather than in other countries.

While this is not yet feasible due to the US’s lack of infrastructure to support these manufacturing practices, these additional charges may incentivize consumers to purchase from sustainable companies that manufacture domestically. Environmentalists and other consumer action groups have continuously promoted purchasing clothing from sustainable brands that don’t use unethical practices, but with little widespread success. With a stark increase in prices that will specifically affect fast fashion brands that manufacture abroad, consumers must begin looking domestically for products.

The newly imposed tariffs have yet to make a large impact on Americans’ everyday lives, but will soon affect most aspects of day-to-day activities. (Sources: Psychiatric Times, Turnbridge)



A. Pan

Adams believes creative outlets are crucial to personal growth

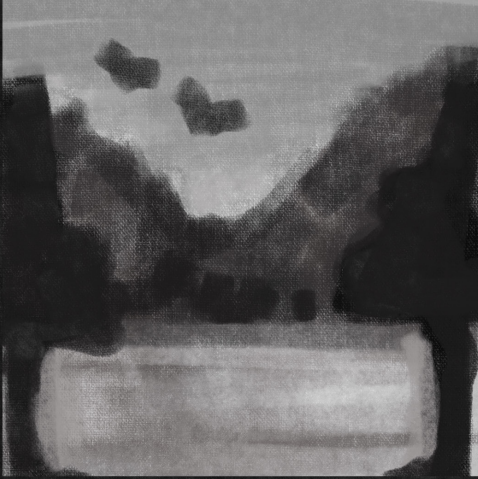
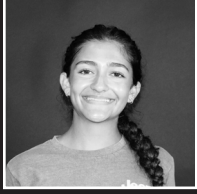
by Kloe Adams
Editorial Editor

Growing up, preschool, kindergarten, and elementary offered strong forms of creative enrichment through hands-on art projects. As school progressed, creative outlets through school dwindled as the standardized curriculum took priority. While I believe the structure of core classes (math, English, science, and history) is very beneficial in preparing students for a higher education in college or simply for life outside of school, creative pursuits are crucial because they foster personal growth and development that are not fully explored in a structured academic environment.

American psychologist Urie Bronfenbrenner developed the Ecological Systems Theory, which explains how interactions shape human development within multiple layers of environment, from immediate family to broader cultural influences. Furthermore, activities shape child development and experiences across different ecological contexts. Out-of-school environments present less structure and may have a greater impact on creativity and curiosity development than experiences within the school context. School allows students to tackle challenging problems and deeply analyze literature pertinent to society; however, the common expectation of solving a problem with one solution leaves little room to explore other possibilities.

The constraints of school not only shed light on the lack of creative outlets but also underscore the importance of artificial intelligence (AI) use within school. Creative thinking diverges into two categories: divergent (generating multiple ideas) and convergent thinking (choosing the best ideas) to determine creative solutions or choices. With the rise of artificial intelligence, researchers coined the phrase “assisted creativity,” where AI works as a collaborator. However, in school specifically, AI plays a larger and more problematic role than just collaborating with students. AI not only generates ideas but also chooses and develops the best ideas, leaving little room for students to insert their perspective or ideas. Moreover, AI takes over the divergent and convergent forms of thinking, meaning students lose any creative opportunities presented in school. Tired from the harsh workloads, students view creative opportunities in school as more work, leading them to use AI to finish what they view as more homework.

As school progresses from elementary school to middle school and then high school, creative outlets are sacrificed for standardized lessons and rigid structures. Even when creative projects are offered, AI takes over the majority of the creative work for the student. High school may not indulge creativity as elementary school once did, meaning students need to take their creative pursuits into their own hands. Drawing, taking pictures, singing, dancing, knitting, sewing, cooking, and baking are all examples of outlets for creativity that involve no incentive for AI use, allowing full divergent and convergent thinking and ultimately sparking imagination. (Sources: Sage Journals, Science Direct, Simply Psychology)



F. Banno

El Gato 2025

Napa Valley College
Sydelle Hanson

UC Berkeley
Katie Borders
Katie Nelson
Ryan Idemoto
Henry Lee
Anvita Anand
Tatum Pyle
Mina Nakamura
Harri Cheetham

Skyline College
Osha Moloney

CSU Monterey Bay
Katherine Wilcox

West Valley College
Lucas Illges
Salma Ali
CJ Rokitta

UC Santa Cruz
Zoe Pandipati
Sophia Nguyen

San Jose City College
Savannah Rios

Cal Poly SLO
Alice Anckarman
Maya Walker
Mayya Sleiman
Nathan Distad
Jovian Hayden
Halle Benjamin
Olivia Dang
Feng Chiang
Brienne Blum
Rose Colgan
Clare Torres

UC Santa Barbara
Lucy Panicacci
Summer Hashemi
Eva Jacobson
Cameron Lui
Ava Thompson
Nico Gómez Llagaria
Sarina Salzer-Swartz

UC Merced
Madan Grewal

UC Riverside
Nikhil Rai
Matthew Ng
Emma Minert
Mason Pang

UCLA
Ria Sharma
Omer Rabin
Rohan Jones
James Xu
Grant Murphy
Tripp Thomas

Chapman University
Ashton Ross
Ava Stefanopoulos
RJ Cannan
Ava DeLaOssa

Seattle University
Campbell Peach

University of Washington
Amy Williamson
Taryn Smith
Brooke McClellan
Ann Tran

University of Oregon
Emery Curtis
Hailey Robinson
Tatum Johnstone

Reed College
Zoe Williamson

Cal Poly Humbolt
Flynn Merriman

UC Davis
Parker Winokur
Annika Norquist
Amber Luu
Taylor Kern
Thien Mai

Sacramento State University
Nyanna Raj

Stanford University
Cici Sun

San Jose State University
Ronan Kinzel
Francis Dudum
Nathan Harris

Santa Clara University
Ryan Kohli
Aahan Guglani
Kathryn Kimyai

Cal State Long Beach
Mia Halsey
Taylor Chesarek

Santa Barbara City College
Alex Hanson
Max Lopez

Cuesta College
Vidar Bastien

Cal State Fullerton
Nicole Steiner

Loyola Marymount University
Lindsey Boyenga
Megan Hastings
Luke Goddard
Stella Vijunco

Whittier College
Addison Sorto

University of Southern California
Rory Zeman
Michael Hein
Anna Suvorova

UC Irvine
Zoey Zhu
Erika Tanaka
Meera Dinkar

Cal Lutheran
Zane Frey

Arizona State University
Daisy Tuckfield

University of Arizona
Christian Riese
Scott Brennan

University of San Diego
Owen Fugit
Victor Dalesio
Abby Sweetnam
Luca Difu

UC San Diego
Yorgo Karamanolis
Kyra Cherlopalle
Keya Patel
Sneha Eapen

San Diego State University
Storm Evans
Cate Kobel
Yalee Gian
Cooper Coddling
Jenny Chase

University of Utah
Kenedy Carlson
Margaret Kennedy
Isabel Webster
Henry Fajardo
Weston Kaefer
Pele Arroyo
Eve in Den Bosch
Jacob Weber

Colorado School of Mines
Lucy Sinclair

Colorado State University
Brayden Robinson
Carrick Stevens

University of Colorado Boulder
Naveen Ettema
Ella Rabitz
Evie Havlicek
Cooper Bannon
Sara Clay-Harrison

Southern Methodist University
William Morley

University of Texas at Austin
Rushil Sharma
Hannah Dibowitz

Texas Tech University
Katie Rodriguez

University of Hawaii at Manoa
Jack Shyba

Senior Map



- Park discusses movie Thunderbolts*
- Wallen releases I'm the Problem

Langner details season five of Netflix's You

by Isabella Langner

People Editor

Warning: Spoilers Ahead for You

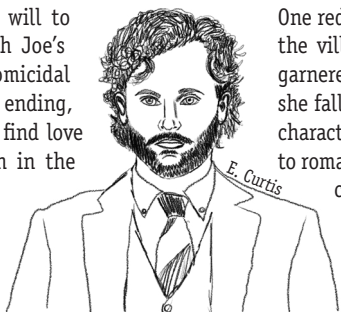
On Apr. 24, Netflix released the fifth and final season of You. The psychological thriller wrapped up with ten chaotic episodes that perfectly tied all the plot lines together.

The show follows the main character, Joe, through his life in New York, LA, the town of Madre Linda, and London. As a neglected foster child, Joe's trauma fuels his need to protect the women with whom he falls in love. He begins as a stalker, but soon reveals himself as an obsessive murderer. Each season, Joe kills more people and slowly falls into madness. The most impressive and captivating part of the series is Joe's blindness to his faults as well as his ability to justify every murder. He is often a hypocrite, judging other people for stalking his own girlfriend while doing the same. Joe's charismatic and charming personality differentiates him from the typical cold serial killer, drawing viewers into loving him as well as the women he stalks.

In Season Four, Joe finally accepts and embraces his murderous side, setting up his chaotic killing spree in Season Five. Viewers see

a switch from his justification that he never wanted to kill anyone to directly telling his wife, Kate, that he enjoys murder. Joe continues to follow his narcissistic and misogynistic pattern in Season Five with a new love interest, Bronte. His past comes to light with multiple accusations on social media after the reveal that Bronte has been part of a plot to out him as a murderer.

Episode Ten ends with a fight scene between Bronte and Joe in an abandoned house. With nothing left to lose, Joe demonstrates his terrifying nature and will to kill. The scene fittingly culminates with Joe's downfall and his descent into truly homicidal behavior. Many people disagreed with the ending, with Joe in a jail cell and never able to find love again, but many also found satisfaction in the season finale. The scene ends with Joe receiving a disturbing letter from a fan. He states, "Maybe we have a problem as a society. Maybe we should fix what's broken in us. Maybe the problem isn't



me. Maybe...it's you." This statement accurately encapsulates Joe. He avoids all responsibility for his crimes, claiming that his past and other people drove him into murder.

The final monologue also calls attention to the audience's tendency to romanticize and therefore justify Joe's crimes. Actor Penn Badgely, who plays Joe, called out viewers on X and in interviews, proclaiming his hatred for the character and hope for viewers to stop romanticizing him. Many fans took to social media to complain that Joe was caught. One reddit user summed up the point of the show saying, "Joe is not the villain. Those truly awful women are." Bronte's character also garnered a lot of hate, with audience's criticizing the ease with which she falls in love with Joe. However, this was exactly the point of her character - to showcase Joe's charisma and reflect viewers' tendencies to romanticize him. One of Joe's victims, while trying to reach Bronte, calls out the abusive pattern of romanticizing killers. She tells Bronte, "If you got fooled by this guy, you are not as smart as you think you are. You are one of those women." Despite controversy, You Season Five uses the criticism to prove their point about romanticizing abusive men.

Thunderbolts* premieres in theaters

by Jordan Park

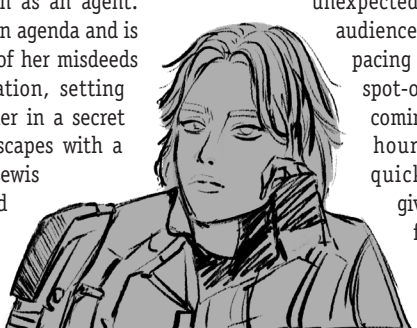
Sports Editor

The latest movie from Marvel Studios, Thunderbolts*, hit theaters May 2 and has exceeded the expectations of fans and critics alike. Packed with action, thrilling plot twists, and a compelling cast of characters, the movie will surely keep you on the edge of your seat.

The story follows Yelena Belova (Florence Pugh), a former Black Widow and sister of Natasha Romanoff. Belova is eager for a more public-facing role after feeling burnt out working for the corrupt director of the CIA, Valentina Allegra de Fontaine (Julia Louis-Dreyfus). Motivated by her father's aspirations, Yelena proposes a change to de Fontaine, who agrees on the condition that she completes one final mission as an agent. However, de Fontaine has her own agenda and is intent on eliminating evidence of her misdeeds amid a congressional investigation, setting her operatives against each other in a secret lab. Unexpectedly, the group escapes with a mysterious man named Bob (Lewis Pullman), who has unique and mighty powers. This reluctant alliance of anti-heroes, now known as the Thunderbolts, includes John Walker (Wyatt Russell), the troubled ex-Captain America, Ghost (Hannah John-Kamen), and the Winter Soldier also known as Bucky Barnes (Sebastian Stan). Together, they band together to confront de Fontaine.

First and foremost, the film offers plenty of laughs, largely thanks to Harbour's over-the-top portrayal of Red Guardian and Yelena's sharp humor. Harbour's loud, boisterous energy and depiction of the character provide a refreshing comedic layer that resonates throughout the film. Whether he's boasting about his past glories as the Soviet superhero or attempting to connect with his on-screen family, his antics are hilarious, as evidenced by the genuine laughter coming from my mom in the seat next to me.

The chemistry among Pugh, Harbour, Russell, Stan, John-Kamen, and Pullman is authentic and truly enjoyable. It's a fun and fresh dynamic that plays out nicely on screen, capturing both the dysfunction and camaraderie of a team that's still learning to trust each other. Their banter, tension, and evolving relationships make for an ensemble that's entertaining to watch as the team takes on high stakes. The action is also consistently impressive throughout the film. From explosive hand-to-hand combat, each scene makes full use of the characters' unique fighting styles and abilities. The film does a great job of blending more intimate fights with larger, cinematic moments. There are a few well-placed jump scares and bursts of suspense that add an



unexpected edge, keeping the audience on their toes. The pacing in this film is also spot-on, with the runtime coming in at around two hours. The film moves quickly and smoothly, giving just enough time for character development while keeping the story moving. It's well-edited and keeps viewers engaged from beginning to end. Overall, it's what you would expect from a Marvel movie: fast-paced and comedic.

While all of the actors deliver solid performances and bring their unique energy and personality to their roles, the main actor, in particular, Florence Pugh, truly shines. Her ability to seamlessly shift between humor and heartfelt sincerity gives the character added complexity and reinforces why Yelena has quickly become a standout in the Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU).

Although it's certainly not the best movie in the MCU, it's definitely worth a watch! (Sources: Forbes, NY Times)

Lorde plans to release new album Virgin

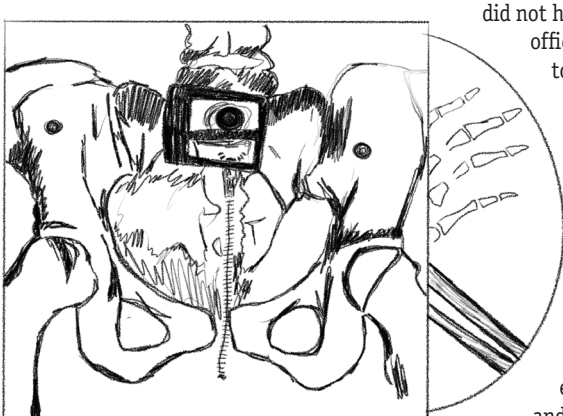
by Katie Nelson

Center Editor

Revered singer-songwriter Lorde surprised fans with her sudden reappearance on the music stage. Her release of videos on TikTok, along with guest appearances and spontaneous concerts, have thrilled crowds and excited her fans for the upcoming "Lorde Summer."

The New Zealand songwriter released her debut EP, The Love Club, in early 2013, and her first studio album, Pure Heroine, later that same year. The album took off with the song Royals topping the Billboard Hot 100 Chart for nine consecutive weeks, making it one of the best selling singles of all time. Since then, Lorde has produced many more hit songs across two albums: Melodrama, released in 2017, and Solar Power, released in 2021. In the interim, she's remained relatively quiet in the music industry, with minimal social media presence.

However, that changed on Apr. 9 when Lorde released a video on TikTok of her walking through Washington Square Park in New York, lip syncing a clip of a new song titled What Was That. Despite it being her very first video on TikTok, it's received over 36 million views and sparked interest everywhere. Following the creation of her TikTok account, she created an Instagram account two days later that has now gained 11.1 million followers thus far. The minimalistic and eccentric content posted on these platforms has enraptured millions of people. Her profile photo on both social media platforms is a dented, metallic water bottle rather than normative perfected portraits many celebrities use.



Her reappearance has led to a revival of many of her songs, which have swept social media as top trending audios for TikTok and Instagram clips.

On Apr. 22, Lorde made a guest appearance in Washington Park Square after blasting an email and text message out earlier that day: "Meet me in the park. Tonight 7:00 PM." Fans didn't need to be told which park, as hundreds gathered at the New York City square. Before 7:00 PM, Lorde announced that the show would not proceed, as the gathering

did not have a permit and local officials asked the crowd to disperse. However, many remained at the square dancing along to and enjoying Lorde's music playing on a speaker, hoping for Lorde to appear. Around 8:00 PM, about a dozen officers entered the crowd and pulled the plug on the music while asking everyone to leave. The crowd was disappointed but unfazed, and moments later the music was blaring again, and fans were walking through the streets of New York City to their own little concert. Around 8:30 PM, those who came back to the park or stuck around nearby received the mini-concert of a lifetime: Lorde emerged and sang What Was That for a smaller but equally elated crowd.

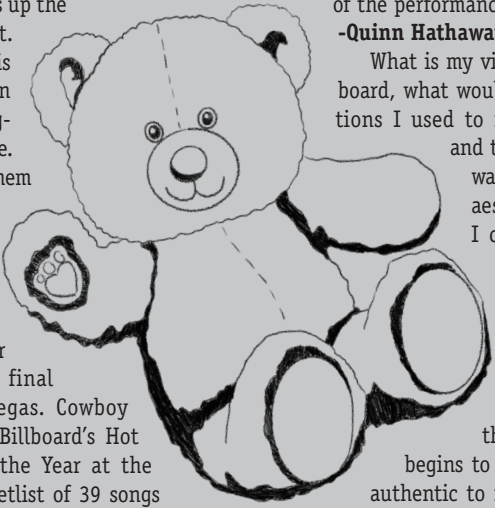
Lorde released the new single What Was That two days after the impromptu gathering, and she also made an appearance at Coachella as one of the guest singers at Charlie XCX's concert. Her summer album, Virgin, is expected to come out on Jun. 27. Given that this is Lorde's first album in four years, her fans are especially anxious as they await the next set of spectacular songs. (Sources: Billboard, Genius, NY Times, Vox)

EL GATO RECOMMENDS: BUILD-A-BEAR, COWBOY CARTER, & MORE

If you're looking for a sentimental gift for your graduating senior to take to college, a personalized Build-A-Bear stuffed animal is the perfect choice. While creating your child's fuzzy companion, you can choose from a selection of animals, possibly recreating a childhood toy, and even dress up the affectionate gift with a meaningful outfit. The most important part of this present is the personalized recorded message you can include inside, giving your child encouraging words as they adapt to their new life. Buy your kids this nostalgic gift and give them a piece of home as they get used to their unfamiliar surroundings.

-Kayla Mitchell, Media Production Editor

Beyoncé kicked off the Cowboy Carter Tour on Apr. 28 in Inglewood's SoFi Stadium. The tour spans nine cities over the course of three months, and the final performance will take place in Las Vegas. Cowboy Carter made history, hitting No. 1 on Billboard's Hot Country chart and winning Album of the Year at the 2025 Grammys. The concert includes a setlist of 39 songs



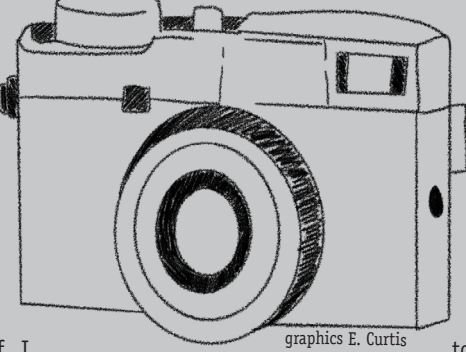
and special appearances by Beyoncé's two daughters, Blue Ivy and Rumi. While the tour already faces controversy over her concert's opening set and the presence of her daughters on stage, fans are still reportedly enjoying the diverse setlist and compelling aspects of the performance.

-Quinn Hathaway, National/World Editor

What is my vibe? If I were a Pinterest board, what would I be? These are questions I used to incessantly ask myself and those around me when I was trying to determine the aesthetic I exude. However, I came up with a perfect solution: my "Running Tally of the Vibes" photo album. Every time I see something I like or think is representative of myself, I take a photo and add it to the album. As the album grows, a more cohesive aesthetic begins to take form - one that I believe is wholly authentic to me. Not only has this album allowed me

to discover my vibe, but it has also allowed me to explore my passion for photography and composition. Therefore, I highly recommend you take out your camera and produce your own "Running Tally of the Vibes."

-Sam Gruetter, Opinion Editor



Searching for music that blends country, jazz, and folk? Old country artists may be able to fulfill your wishes. Check out artists like John Denver, Jim Croce, and Keith Whitley, who embody this authentic music genre that modern artists tend to shy away from. Their narrative style conveys deep emotions to their listeners through calm melodies. Regardless of the occasion, whether it be a long car drive or a sunny day at the beach, any of these older artists can satisfy your musical yearnings and childhood nostalgia. **-Margo Rawlings, Editor-in-Chief**

Hastings recommends best movies for high schoolers

by Megan Hastings
Public Relations Manager

We all have things in our lives that we look forward to daily: things to keep on living for. If you could not tell by my TikTok reposts and incessant Letterboxd ranting, my personal indulgence is movies. Now that my three-year tenure at El Gato is coming to an end in June, I thought I'd recommend a few of my favorite films – the ones that helped me get through these decisively unforgettable years.

Lady Bird (2017): A messy ode to mothers and daughters, hometowns, and the complex, bittersweet pain of maturing. I saw myself in every argument, every silent car journey, and every desire for something “more.” This movie may work best for juniors who dream of leaving their hometown but weirdly love it.

The Florida Project (2017): Vibrant hues, sorrowful heart. From a child's

perspective, it demonstrates how happiness can be found on the periphery. It's a poignant reminder that while innocence carries us, it can't always protect us.

The Social Network (2010): Students might find themselves in this piercing, slightly terrifying mirror of a movie. If you're feeling competitive or overwhelmed by college applications, this movie will remind you that an Ivy League degree won't fix all your problems.

The Perks of Being a Wallflower (2012): Best fitting for freshman and sophomores (or, anyone who's ever felt on the outside looking in). This movie is especially

cathartic if you're navigating the ultimate obstacle of adolescence: identity.

The Edge of Seventeen (2016): This humorous and brutally honest look at the complexities of teenage identity, family, and friendships skillfully encapsu-

lates the struggles of socializing in high school. The main character, Nadine, acts as the patroness of “it's not that deep” (but, it is).

Dead Poets Society (1989): When school begins to feel like a box, watch this. It'll make you want to stand on a desk and seize the day – existential crisis optional.

The Breakfast Club (1985): Perfect for all students and the blueprint for all subsequent high school films. One Saturday detention, five strangers, and a lesson that we are all much more than what other people perceive us to be.

Ghost World (2001): Dry, weird, and existential in all the best ways. An ideal film for the “I don't fit in here” crowd, especially when you're watching the world change faster than you are.

Regardless of whether you're a senior acting like you have it all figured out, a freshman trying to figure it all out, or anywhere in between, I hope you discover a story on this list that makes you feel seen. Because if I've learned anything from high school — and movies — it's that you're never as alone as you believe you are. There's always a middle-aged director out there who understands how your young mind works. Here's to the heartbreaking soundtracks, the characters we aspire to be, the unresolved endings, and the moments that give us hope that we are understood, even if only for two hours.



Strahs raves about Severance

by Hayley Strahs
News Editor

If you feel overwhelmed with homework and AP prep, picture a life where you never left the classroom. Luckily, subscribers to Apple TV+ don't have to imagine it. A combination of Black Mirror and The Office, Severance puts a chilling spin on the monotony of a nine-to-five job. Despite its futuristic themes, director Ben Stiller classifies Severance as speculative fiction, not sci-fi, because of its striking relevance to modern society. The series centers around Lumon, a company that requires its crucial employees to undergo a procedure called severance that permanently splits their consciousness between their work and personal lives.

When severed employee Mark S. (Adam Scott) receives the task of training a rambunctious new Lumon hire named Helly R. (Britt Lower), questions begin to arise among the “innies” — employees' work consciousnesses — about the true purpose behind their seemingly simple work:

Macrodata Refinement. Meanwhile, Mark's personal consciousness, or “outie,” can never catch a break from his kooky neighbor (Patricia Arquette) and irritating brother-in-law (Michael Chernus) while preparing for the upcoming birth of his nephew. As the personal and professional lives of the Macrodata Refinement team begin to intertwine, Mark S., Helly R., Dylan G. (Zach Cherry), and Irving B. (John Turturro) must join together to answer their questions about the sev-

ered floor on which they work. Through its profound explorations of love, identity, and morality, Severance encourages viewers to ponder what it truly means to live a fulfilling life.

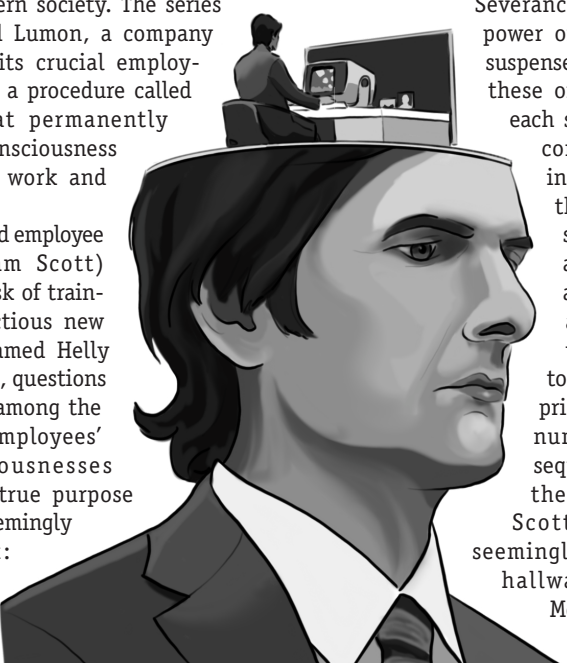
Beyond its compelling storyline, Severance's cinematography and score are exceptional. From its jazzy outros — including Daydream in Blue by I Monster and The Windmills of Your Mind by Mel Tormé — to its artful montages to Joe McPhee's Shakey Jake and Motörhead's Ace of Spades,

Severance harnesses the power of music to build suspense and intrigue. In these often short clips, each scene counts and communicates key information about the characters on screen. However, as impressive as these scenes are, Stiller and the other directors take the most pride in the show's numerous running sequences in which the camera chases Scott through the seemingly never-ending hallways of Lumon.

Moreover, the animated theme songs are top notch; each season's intro is teeming with Easter eggs.

While Season Three's release date remains unknown, all episodes of Seasons One and Two are on Apple TV+ as of Mar. 21. Even if futurism isn't your thing, the 19 hour-long episodes will fly by in the blink of an eye. Whether you're a wannabe philosopher or simply a cinema buff, Severance is truly a must-watch.

(Sources: IMDb, USA Today)



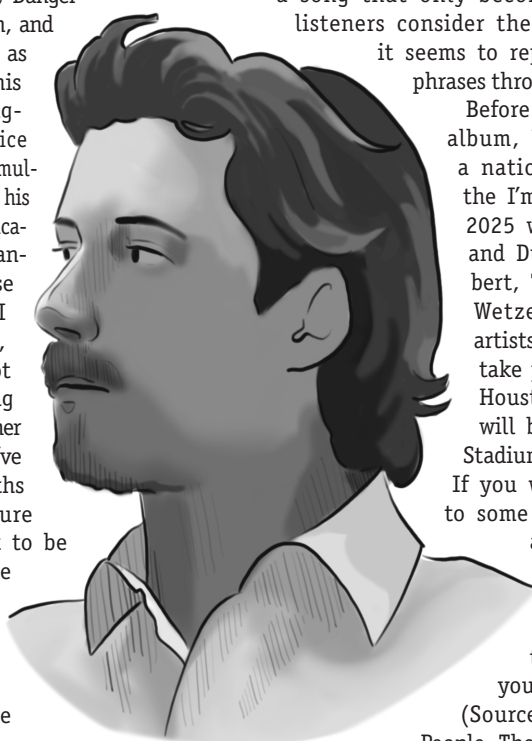
Morgan Wallen releases new album

by Megan Saul
Culture Editor

Morgan Wallen, the Country Music Association's (CMA) Entertainer of the Year, released his fourth studio album on May 16, entitled I'm the Problem. This album is composed of 37 songs, including collaborations with Hardy, Post Malone, Tate McRae, and more. In just the first day of Wallen releasing it, I'm the Problem broke the record for Spotify's most-streamed country album in 2025.

Prior to the release of the full album, Wallen dropped many of the songs as singles. These include Lies Lies Lies, Smile, and Superman. Additionally, he performed on Saturday Night Live as the musical guest on Mar. 29. He sang Just in Case and I'm the Problem before abruptly leaving the stage, saying he had to return to “God's country.”

I'm the Problem differs from his three past albums, If I Know Me, Dangerous: The Double Album, and One Thing at a Time, as it focuses more on his rocky past and struggles with fame. Police have arrested Wallen multiple times throughout his career for public intoxication and reckless endangerment. About these arrests, Wallen said, “I have been a problem, for sure, and I've got no problem admitting that...But there are other sides to me as well. I've spent the last 11 months really trying to figure out, ‘Do I still want to be the problem? Is it time to move past that phase in my life?’ I think it probably is, and this might be the last time I get a chance to honestly say it.”



So far, audiences have mixed feelings about the album; some say that it has “no misses,” while others find it straying too far from his classic country sound. While many of the lyrics are impressively original, all one hour and 57 minutes of the album sound similar in terms of melodies and pacing.

The album starts with the title track, a vulnerable piece that has already topped the charts globally. Throughout the album, his vocals are less of a focus and a strength, as producers exaggerated the autotune, unlike traditional pure vocals in country music. The track What I Want featuring McRae highlights the new style as it is a more pop-like song. Some of my favorite songs include Revelation, I Got Better, and Jack and Jill, as he balances heartfelt lyrics with upbeat tunes without sounding too repetitive. I'm the Problem concludes with I'm A Little Crazy, a song that only becomes notable when listeners consider the lyrics. Otherwise, it seems to repeat the same few phrases throughout its duration.

Before the release of the album, Wallen announced a nationwide tour called the I'm the Problem Tour 2025 with guests Brooks and Dunn, Miranda Lambert, Thomas Rhett, Koe Wetzel, and additional artists. The first show will take place on Jun. 20 in Houston, Texas, and he will be coming to Levi's Stadium on Aug. 1 and 2. If you want to sing along to some catchy tunes that are sure to be playing on the radio all summer, you should add I'm the Problem to your Spotify playlist.. (Sources: Morgan Wallen, People, The Tennessean)

SOMBR MAKES WAVES AS NEW ARTIST

by Kayla Mitchell
Media Production Editor

Within the past few months, popular music artist Sombr has taken over social media platforms with his new hit songs. After posting short snippets of his tracks online, Sombr's music has garnered the attention of many eager listeners. His unique indie and rock style music combined with his heartfelt and sometimes painful lyrics, reflecting on emotional moments in his life, help him form a deeper connection with his fans. Sombr's quick rise to top charts marks the beginning of a successful career for the young artist.

Sombr, whose real name is Shane Boose, was raised in the lower east side of New York City. Surrounded by music in this urban environment, the nineteen-year-old has felt its strong influence since he was a child. Sombr began his music career by producing songs alone in his bedroom, such as his debut single Nothing Left to Say in October of 2021. The artist attended high school as a vocal major but dropped out at the age of seventeen after releasing the hit song Caroline as a junior in 2022. After posting a short snippet of the song on social media, the clip went viral gaining the attention of thousands of viewers on popular apps like TikTok. This led to the release of his debut EP In Another Life the next year. Sombr has made great strides in 2025, with his singles Back to Friends and Undressed both

appearing on several national billboard charts including the Billboard Hot 100. In April of this year, Sombr exceeded 20 million listeners on Spotify and his singles Back to Friends and Would've Been You surpassed 100 million streams on the platform.

Sombr's style of music can be described as indie rock and alternative pop with poignant lyrics connecting him to his listeners. He created the stage name Sombr, reflecting, “To be quite honest, I was going through a rough part of my life when I released my first single. Sombr kind of made sense for how I was feeling.” Sombr's music is inspired by memories from his life, and heartfelt moments that he wants his listeners to connect with. In his recent single In Your Arms the emotional lyrics read, “If your love was a cig, I smoke my lungs, every time I think I'm done, I need another one,” explaining the addiction associated with romantic love. Of

his creations, Sombr explained, “I want to help people with my music. I want people to use it as a way to cope with different things that they are going through in life. Just like I have used it. I want people to feel something.”

Growing up in the city exposed the young artist to many different types of music. Sombr noted that his biggest music influences are Radiohead, Bon Iver, Phoebe Bridgers, and Jeff Buckley. He also shared that he has been inspired by films such as The Notebook and Call Me by Your Name, both emotionally charged films that relate to the artist's sentimental style of music. While Sombr started off his career just a few years ago producing music in his bedroom, the young star has now moved to LA and has begun to develop his career more professionally. Tickets are now available for Sombr's “The Late Nights & Young Romance Tour” at The Fillmore in San Francisco this October. (Sources: 1883 Magazine, Off the Record Press)



- Wilde comments on divas in space
- Pandey writes a letter about El Gato

HUMOR

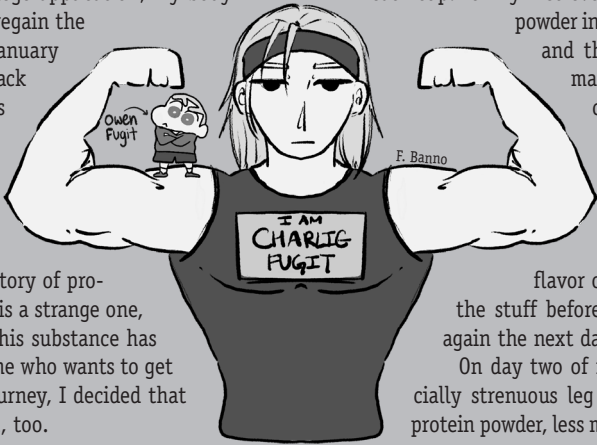
EL GATO • WEDNESDAY, MAY 28, 2025 • LOS GATOS HIGH SCHOOL • WWW.ELGATONWS.COM

FUGIT TESTS OUT HIS BROTHER'S PROTEIN ROUTINE

by Owen Fugit
Editor-in-Chief

This past March (for the fourth time in my high school career), I decided to start working out and getting fit. I had a good reason to restart my fitness aspirations, as first semester senior year was devastating for my body as a whole. By October, I had given up on eating full meals and settled for Pop-tarts and Gatorade at 7-11. By the time I submitted my final college application, my body was in crisis mode. In an effort to regain the several decades that August to January took off my life, I chose to get back in the gym. But this time, things would be different.

Anyone who has looked into personal fitness in the past six months will tell you that everything revolves around a magical substance known as protein. The story of protein in the personal fitness sphere is a strange one, but to save time, just know that this substance has become the end-all be-all for anyone who wants to get fit. So when I began my fitness journey, I decided that I should hop on the protein wagon, too.



After my first workout in mid-March, I left our small home gym setup and entered the kitchen, ready to get more than my fill of protein. The most popular way to ingest protein is through protein shakes, which use protein powders that come from a variety of sources, each more confusing than the last. My brother, who plays several sports and is very serious about protein intake, uses a special protein powder that includes thousands of calories in each cup. For my first-ever protein potion, I put two cups of powder in a blender, followed by a lot of milk, and then I dumped in a cup of frozen mango cubes. Our blender holds seven cups of liquid, and I had brimmed the tank before blending a single item. The shake tasted terrible. Nobody told me that protein powder tastes so bad and that this specific powder takes on the flavor of evil vanilla. I had half a glass of the stuff before calling it quits. I elected to try again the next day.

On day two of my fitness journey, after an especially strenuous leg workout, I chose to include less protein powder, less milk, and more fruits. I looked like a

bartender playing fruit ninja, adding bananas, blueberries, peaches, and mangos to the blender in an effort to mask the atrocious flavor of the protein powder. I made an average amount of the shake, and as I brought the glass to my lips, I could already tell that something was different in this batch. The first sip confirmed my theory: the shake was actually palatable! But as I pounded my second glass of the potion, I realized that flavor was no longer my only concern. I now had to worry about stomaching 2000 calories and 50 grams of protein in one sitting. And then the flavor changed, too. Within an instant the shake became bitter, and the concrete-esque drink lost all of its appeal as I tried desperately to stop myself from throwing up at 7:30 in the morning.

After a few weeks of abstaining from protein, I decided to try my hand at crafting a shake one more time. This time, I used chocolate syrup instead of fruit to flavor the smoothie, and after using an entire bottle of the stuff, the protein powder's awful taste still scythed through the mix, emerging before the chocolate to create an unforgettable flavor that I won't even try describing.

Many people have told me that I just need to get over the flavor, but I refuse to take their advice, even though it may be correct. From now on, it's no more protein shakes. I think I'll just stop working out and accept that I will die at 30 from all the junk food I ate last year.

NORTHROP DETAILS STARDOM

by Ainsley Northrop
Editor-in-Chief

After three years of hardcore writing, tedious page creation, daring photography, and relentless editing, I, **Ainsley Northrop** (your favorite El Gato staff member), am signing off. You may be panicking. I would panic, too, if the person who writes my favorite stories was leaving me in the dust. "Who's going to keep me updated on all things choir and water polo?" "Who's going to leave me chuckling after all her Humor articles and take photos of the most random school events?" While I may be going off to college soon, I am not gone yet. So, here are some of my greatest moments as an El Gatan.

When I first joined El Gato, I was one of the only people who didn't take Multimedia Journalism, and nothing prepared me for the terrifying world of InDesign. Trying to type on a line nearly gave me an aneurysm and, somehow, I managed to warp every single photo on my page. My knowledge was at such a deficit that, my first press week, I finished dead last with tears in my eyes. But, as Kelly Clarkson likes to say, "What doesn't kill you makes you stronger." Soon after, I became one of the fastest to finish.

Fast forward a year and it's the start of my photography career. I am on the pool deck with fellow El Gatan **Nelson Kramer**. If you are a true fan, you already know what went down from my Humor article last year. To briefly summarize, let's just say that Kramer and I thought it would be a good idea to ask a random lady for camera advice. This ended in one broken lens and two broken hearts. I'd like to think that this fluke sparked my unbeatable photography motivation; who else can say they've taken photos of everything from water



polo and the Spirit Rally to Dog Day and even a (staged at the last minute) math competition for **Katie Nelson's** article?

This article wouldn't be complete without mentioning my singular day spent as a graphics editor. Anyone who's seen my drawings on the white board in room 506 (sorry, AP Lit) knows that my art skills are...questionable. A portrait of **Lucy Panicacci** constructed entirely out of the word "Lucy" and an abstract compilation of names remain among my best works. Needless to say, when last year's chiefs made me a graphics editor, I panicked. If my drawings had ever made it into the paper, one might've guessed that a toddler was submitting guest work. Thankfully, with one art reference photo, I escaped my fate and took on a second year as a People editor. You should be thankful.

Finally, let's not forget my investigative journalism. This year, Panicacci and I trekked through the LG pickleball courts in search of the truth behind the motor oil vandalism. Last year, I spent hours researching an obscure art competition and tracking down the students who were a part of it. And sophomore year, I braved the Drama events - even after I quit the class the year prior.

In all seriousness, I will miss El Gato dearly. I'll always remember when someone spelled my name "Ainlsey Northdrop" in one of last year's issues, when we had to determine how to consistently capitalize sports teams, how we always had Zumba parties, and how - during nearly every class - I munched on Dot's pretzels with Margo Rawlings. This class has been an adventure that I'll never forget.

Pan highlights her struggles with the sun

by Annabelle Pan
Graphics Editor

If you're like me and you are desperately afraid of needles, then we can agree that getting a blood draw is no walk in the park. Having a needle in your arm while the nurse extracts tube after tube of blood is awful. Even after that stressful ordeal, the nightmare continues when you get your test results back, and you find out that you're Vitamin D deficient. Like, how? That's the vitamin you can get by just sitting outside in the sun.

Before, it was out of sight out of mind, and you could gaslight yourself into thinking you already got your monthly dose of sun; once you know your body has insufficient levels of Vitamin D, there's no going back. Every time you go outside and see the sun, you'll think of your test results and remember that you should be out there, absorbing the vitamins and UV rays. You probably won't do it because, let's be honest, the sunlight burning you alive does not feel good, but you still know you should. At this point, it's just a mild inconvenience of having the knowledge, but you can still go about your day without changing anything.

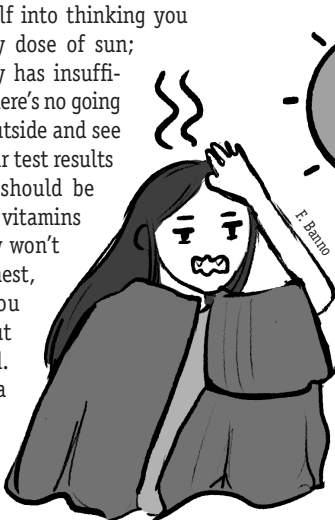
However, once your friends find out, it's over. They're going to constantly push you out of the lovely shade and make you walk in the sunlit areas. They won't let you forget that you're deficient in the vitamin that is the most readily available. Although, to be fair, Vitamin D is the most common vitamin

deficiency, so the sun must not be doing its job properly. Your friends will insist on doing homework outside in the burning light, instead of in a cool room. They might even try to convince the whole group to eat lunch on the front lawn with no shade to protect you. You'll have to put your foot down on that one, though.

Sunlight by itself isn't the problem. It's the heat and the skin cancer that will surely come out of having first-hand interactions with sunlight. You could put on sunscreen, but that's a whole other problem. It's a whole tube of nope. It's inconvenient, feels weird,

looks weird, and is simply a general nuisance to use. There are a few beautiful days in the year when the sun makes you understand why cats love sunbathing, but then there are also the many times when you can feel your skin cells crying out for help. Vampires are pretty smart; sunlight sucks.

Maybe you haven't experienced this struggle yet, but don't pretend this has nothing to do with you. Given the previous statistics of adults lacking Vitamin D and the Gen Z determination to avoid touching grass, you're probably Vitamin D insufficient or deficient. But there's no need to get a blood test. Remember: out of sight, out of mind. As long as there is no concrete evidence of your deficiency, there is no need for you to change anything...yet.



WILDE CRITICIZES WASTEFUL DIVAS IN SPACE

by Jane Wilde
Public Relations Manager

A television news host, a journalist, and a pop star walk into a space capsule. No, I am not trying to tell you a joke; this really happened. On Apr. 14, Katy Perry, Gayle King, Lauren Sanchez, Kerianne Flynn and Amanda Nguyen took off in a space capsule to advertise Jeff Bezos's new space company, Blue Origin.

One thing particularly entertaining about the space flight was watching the crewmates experience epiphanies a four-year-old would have. After landing, Jeff Bezos's wife, Lauren Sanchez, told the press that once you see Earth from space, "You look at it and you're like, wow, we're all in this together." This isn't High School Musical, Sanchez; wrap it up. Sanchez's crewmate and CBS news anchor, Gayle King, added, "You look down at the planet and think, 'that's where we came from.'" Looks like Socrates is in the house, everybody!

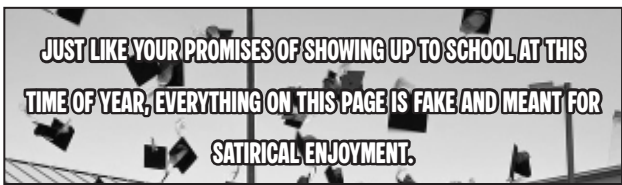
When asked what inspired her to go to space, Katy Perry said that she was excited by

the "STEM of it all" and that she found astrology riveting, a concept that has little to nothing to do with astrophysics. It looked like she was being interviewed for a job that she has zero experience for. Who's going to tell her that her rising sun Pisces birthmark won't help her become an astronaut?

When the capsule landed, Perry kissed the ground and raised a daisy to the sky as if she were an astronaut coming back from a six month-long research expedition. She was up there for 11 minutes. 11 minutes! I've been stuck in a drive-thru line longer than that. Perry talked about her 11-minute journey to space like a veteran recalling their experience in war. Upon landing, she remarked, "I feel super connected to love...this experience has shown me you never know how much love is inside of you and how loved you are." 11 million dollars and 5,000 kilograms of fossil fuels later and she feels connected to love? Post-flight Perry also told Good Morning America, "I hope they can understand that we weren't just taking up space, we were making space for the future...this wasn't a ride, it wasn't a destination, it was a

journey." Each interview seemed like an incoherent attempt at trying to sound poetic and deep.

Perry claimed the daisy she held up in space was not only a tribute to her daughter named Daisy, but a tribute to Mother Earth herself. She said that the flower served as a reminder to nurture Earth, "to appreciate it and remember it, take care of it and protect it," directly after releasing tons of fuels into Earth's atmosphere for the sake of an advert for Jeff Bezos's space tourism company. Doesn't seem very nurturing to me. On the descent back to Earth, Perry sang Billy Armstrong's "What a Wonderful World" to the crew. I don't know what's more terrifying: the singing or the capsule plummeting at extreme speeds to its landing. From the ridiculously dramatic preparation, the announcement of her world tour written on a plastic butterfly that she showed to the camera in space, and her acting as if she'd just returned from the battlefield, this entire flight felt like one giant SNL skit. (Sources: AeroTime, USA TODAY)



HASTINGS DISCUSSES TRISHA PAYTAS THEORIES

by Megan Hastings
Public Relations Manager

It's official...it's a boy! Trisha Paytas announced the gender of her third child during the Los Angeles stop of her tour on May 4. While this may go unnoticed by many, to the chronically online keen eyes, this is proof of a growing conspiracy theory involving Paytas and her fanbase. This, of course, is the theory that Paytas's children seem to coincide with the deaths of prominent figures. In 2022, Paytas announced she was having a girl shortly after Queen Elizabeth II died. This time, her new baby boy raised eyebrows, as people pointed their fingers at the recently deceased Pope Francis. As Trisha adds more to the Paytas clan, we can be sure to hear more truths—I mean conspiracies—about who her next child is the reincarnation of. Here are some celebrities

and figures that I personally hope can make it into the Paytas household, whether that's in a few years or decades.

The woman most famously known for breaking up the Beatles, Yoko Ono, may actually turn out to be God's greatest gift: Trisha Paytas's next child. Trisha and Yoko are similar in their controversial and dramatic pasts, so it isn't hard to imagine her motherly instincts kicking in as she coaches little Yoko through her first kitchen-cry video.

While not the first person to come to mind, Frank Gallagher from Shameless would surely bring some good-ol' family drama to the Paytas household. Frankly, I think his crass attitude would definitely make for some troubled teen years in the family. However, if you think about it, they're really two sides of the same coin. His raw, raunchy personality and her charismatic, unrestrained humor would make for an interesting family dinner, talking about the questionable things that each of them did in the past.

Let's now discuss Freddie Mercury. The only one who could match Trisha's fierceness in a musical number and a dramatic YouTube vlog is Baby Freddie. Imagine Trisha throwing a yearly karaoke event featuring Bohemian Rhapsody, and her tiny Mercury stealing the spotlight in eyeliner and glitter. However, a few years later, the mommy issues resulting from their rivalry would likely make for a fascinating family therapy session. But there can only be one diva in a household.

Lastly, Princess Diana. Imagine baby Di



REINCARNATED?

being reborn into the hectic glamour of the Paytas household. One moment, she would be drinking from a tiny Stanley cup, and the next, she would be performing a TikTok vlog with Trisha wearing matching skirts. By eighteen, she's already side-eyeing Prince George on the For You Page and taking soft-launch selfies at the age of five. Trisha would totally purchase a dazzling small convertible for herself and refer to it as "the people's Prius." And to be honest? Iconic!

Panicacci reflects on her high school years

by Lucy Panicacci
Editor-in-Chief

As I finish my final month of high school, I have been looking back on all my years at LGHS, reflecting on the highs and the lows. While I've had my own set of dilemmas, I think we all collectively experienced some LGHS canon events. Together, I'd like to take a trip down memory lane.

Straight out of quarantine, my freshman year, everyone was excited to be back. What were they excited about, you may ask? No, not seeing all their friends again or not being locked behind a computer screen 24/7. It was devious licks. Nothing felt like a warmer welcome back to school than people ripping soap dispensers off the walls, disconnecting toilets, and stealing seat covers. It seems that after over a year and a half of being confined to staying at home, people forgot how to act. I also could not explain to you the events of Señor Cueto's Spanish class. The atmosphere of the classroom bred chaos. Cueto would wheel a student around in a shopping cart. Someone would vlog the class with a huge camera. Another kid lit his hair on fire for a presentation. People would climb onto the top of the cabinets. I don't know why a Spanish 2 class would necessitate any of this, but every day would come with something new. Don't get me started on the Freshman Fun Run, either. In what world did they have us running three miles for PE class and then making us go to classes after? I feel bad for teachers dealing with freshman boys. Those teachers are true warriors for powering through that post-run stank.

AP European History defined my sophomore year. I was only taking one AP class, yet it somehow had the same workload and time commitment as taking four APs junior year. I had a love-hate relationship with AP Euro discussions.

Every class, I had to be ready and locked in to get the discussion points. The way we all shot up our hands to be called on, with some going a little too over the top, aggressively waving their arms back and forth, pleading, "Mr. Hughes, call on me!" A part of us transformed into a beggar from the Middle Ages, asking for just a bit of bread. Yes, I still remember the test question on the Irish eating babies, and yes, I misinterpreted the passage and got all the questions wrong.

Sophomore year also marked the time of everyone starting to get their driver's licenses. In my case, I had the overly cautious parents: the parents who instinctively clutched the roof handle whenever I went five miles under the speed limit, like it would grant them invisibility in the case of a crash. The parents who would send me Instagram reels about how to drive after I make a single minor mistake. The parents who had a near heart attack if I went through the light a millisecond after it turned yellow. But hey, it's better to go through that than be a senior without a license!

Junior year was bad. We all know it. Test after test. ICE after ICE. One after the other of embarrassing APUSH skits where I dressed up in full colonial garb or whipped on the Jojo Siwa makeup from her song Karma. However, no one talks about the stress of the first semester of senior year. It's much worse. Prepare yourself.

As the winner of the Most Changed Since 6th Grade superlative award, I can confirm that a lot has changed. Look at us seniors. We are so humble that we let the sophomores tie with us at the Spirit Rally for the first time ever. Even with us graduating this year, though, some aspects of LGHS won't change. While the remaining classes will dearly miss our presence, they may look forward to many, many, many more years of fire alarms randomly going off.



Pandey informs incoming El Gato staff

by Atharava Pandey
National/World Editor

As the school's undoubtedly most reliable news source, El Gato prepares to proudly welcome the next batch of brave journalists, ready to deliver completely unbiased news, just as we've always done. However, the journey to the Hall of Fame at El Gato is no cakewalk; in fact, it is more like climbing an entire mountain range.

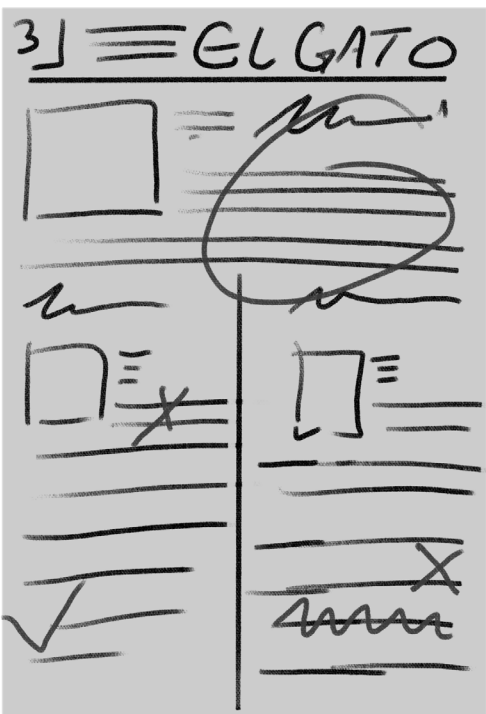
InDesign, the software used to make the newspaper pages, has ruined more than one of my nights. Although my template was as good as it could be at the start of the year, some of us were unfortunate enough to be cursed with haunted templates, making the simplest tasks impossible. Hopefully, you are one of the ones who get a template that works. Even still, I have had countless battles with my computer, trying to move the text box just one click up, and somehow watching it end up on the opposite side of the page. And do not even start on text wrap. It is almost as if the program knows exactly how to push you to the brink of a breakdown.

Perhaps the most frustrating part of the class for many is how meticulous the El Gato Style Guide is. Honestly, it is harder to understand than most AP class syllabi. To this day, I still couldn't confidently tell you what purpose an Oxford comma serves. The comment to avoid passive voice (APV) is now fully ingrained in my head and will soon be etched in yours. I constantly hear ghosts whispering, "Keep Tone Formal and Objective" and "Better Word Choice." My subconscious, as well as my writing style, has changed forever.

A bright ray of sunshine during those dark times—when you're crying over your cursed InDesign page—is the legendary El Gato Wall of Quotes. This magical wall contains the words of the people who voluntarily chose to undertake this difficult quest before you. They are often hilarious comments and make you realize that you are not alone. Others have also suffered through haunted templates and the Style Guide, and shockingly lived to tell the tale.

By far the most important thing, some might call it the secret treasure of El Gato, is the magnificent, mesmerizing, utterly scrumptious snack cabinet. Writing articles is fun, theoretically, but it is nothing compared to the glory that is the snack cabinet. Upon joining El Gato, all members solemnly swear to sacrifice their lives if any danger strikes the cabinet. The snack cabinet is only accessible to El Gatans, and any violations can be punished with shame, exile, or worse.

Although El Gato can be chaotic and even a little terrifying for newcomers on the outside, rest assured that this class is absolutely worth it. You will learn how to find your voice, express your opinions, and meet some cool people along the way, if I do say so myself. Take me, for example. At the beginning of the year, I could not even spell "cheif" properly (can you believe it?!), but now, I can actually write a somewhat coherent article, occasionally. And progress is everything.



Singhal gives tips to make it to the end of the year

by Siyona Singhal
News Editor

The sun is shining, AP season is wrapping up, you are making summer plans, it's almost the end of the year...right? Wrong. Even though this laborious school year feels complete, there is still much to be done. If you're a student like me who suffers from early-onset senioritis, there are a few things you can do to trudge through this month instead of giving up and watching Netflix all day.

First, keep a calendar. Nothing maintains your motivation like crossing off yet another day before our suffering - I mean, school year - comes to an end. Hang the calendar up on your wall or near your desk so when you're finishing those last assignments, the thought of the dwindling number of days left in the school year can keep you going. Speaking of homework, another tip is to make a routine. If you need an idea, here's my after-school schedule: go home, do one question from my homework, have a breakdown, stare into the void until dinner, and lastly, go to sleep telling myself I'm going to wake up early to do the rest of my homework (I won't). Now, your routine may not be as efficient as mine, but any semblance of a pattern can set you up for success. You may be saying "Siyona, I don't feel motivated to do my homework after school," but I have a solution for that. Two words: reward system. Every paragraph of an essay earns you a sweet treat, and every math question answered is two minutes of doom-scrolling.

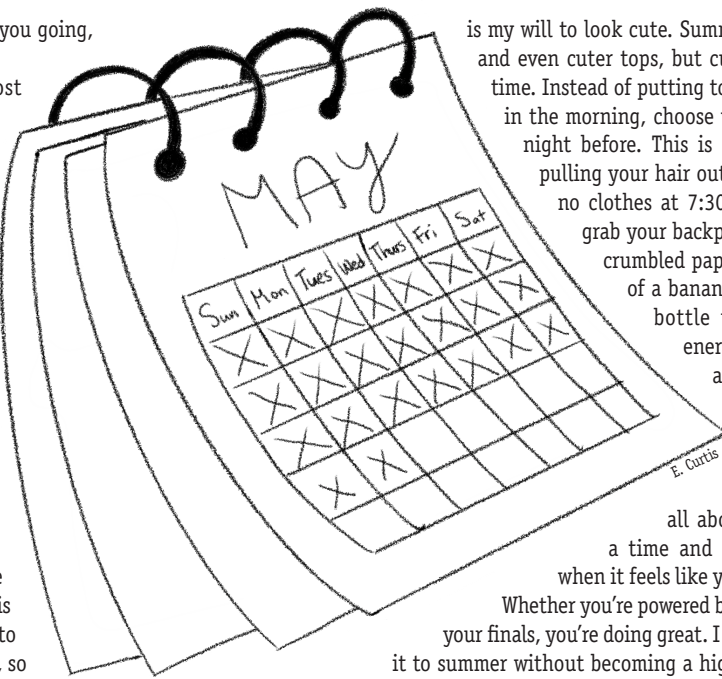
It's the little things that keep you going, you know?

We all know that the most difficult task in the morning is waking up. I have slept through my 15 alarms and woken up with ten minutes left to leave the house way too often. But I have formulated the perfect way to fix this issue. Set your alarm to the most annoying song you know. I recommend Thick of It by KSI or Dance Monkey by Tones and I. The excruciating rhythm of your song of choice will force you to wake up simply to save your poor ears. Continuing on with morning routines, the biggest portion of my morning is taken up by choosing an outfit to wear. With the sun coming out, so

is my will to look cute. Summer is the time for cute shorts and even cuter tops, but curating these ensembles takes time. Instead of putting together your outfit for the day in the morning, choose what you're going to wear the night before. This is a sure way to save you from pulling your hair out and screaming that you have no clothes at 7:30 AM every day. Make sure to grab your backpack full of broken dreams and crumbled papers, a hearty lunch consisting of a banana and some gum, and a water bottle that may be filled with an energy drink to ensure you look and feel good during the day.

The last few weeks of school feel like being burned alive, but it's also the best time of the year. It's all about taking school one day at a time and showing up to school, even when it feels like your personal torture chamber.

Whether you're powered by caffeine or the fear of failing your finals, you're doing great. I believe in your ability to make it to summer without becoming a high school dropout...probably



- Robinson thrives in hockey
- Cherlopalle shines as a coxswain

PEOPLE

EL GATO • WEDNESDAY, MAY 28, 2025 • LOS GATOS HIGH SCHOOL • WWW.ELGATONNEWS.COM

SHARMA EXPLORES INTEREST IN MEDICINE

by Katie Nelson
Center Editor

Senior **Ria Sharma** does it all. Between softball, volunteering for the local hospital, interning in molecular research, and managing a demanding class schedule of six AP classes, she does it with determination and a smile. This year, Sharma’s schedule is all AP classes, including Spanish, Government & Honors Economics, Biology, Chemistry, Physics C, Statistics, and Literature, but she said her favorite is



“definitely bio...I love all things bio.” Sharma said she’s interested in biology and medicine and hopes to pursue that in college. Currently, she volunteers at Good Samaritan’s Pediatric Hospital on weekends and has done various research at UCSF including computational screening of proteins that identify features that would make them interesting to study.

Regarding her future plans, Sharma said, “I’m going to UCLA and I’m majoring in molecular cell and developmental biology, and I’m obviously hoping to get involved in research and that sort of stuff. I’m on the pre-med track.” Sharma explained she’s most looking forward to the opportunities at UCLA and the chance to be independent and explore all that college has to offer. She said that “UCLA was always my dream school...it’s perfect, I mean it has good academics and a great location in state... good weather and the sports teams!” Along with her interest in research, Sharma added, “I’ll definitely join some clubs to meet new people and stuff and I’m thinking of doing intramural soccer.”

Right now, Sharma is finishing up her senior season of softball. The team dominated the league with a 14-1 record, and has CCS approaching soon. Sharma explained that she got into softball due to her sisters:



“We’ve all played softball since we were like five, so I’ve been playing for a long time. It’s really fun, the team here is great. It’s a good time and it’s a good distraction from school and stuff.”

Sharma said she’s looking forward to the coming weeks of senior activities and for summer to arrive. Her favorite thing about LGHS is “definitely the people. I’ve made a lot of good friends,” but she is looking forward to leaving behind the structured schedule of high school. A huge inspiration and role model for her has been “Ms. [Cathy] Messenger... [ASR] was a journey and she’s helped a lot. She wrote my letters of recommendation and helped a lot with guidance through college stuff.” Sharma credited her older sisters for being huge sources of guidance and inspiration throughout high school as well.

In addition to all the end of the year activities, Sharma plans to run a half-marathon on June 1, which she chose to do because it seemed fun and she did cross country for a couple of years. In summer, she plans to do EMT training in LA, along with some camping and spending time with her older sister at Michigan University. Undoubtedly leaving behind a legacy at LGHS, Sharma will continue to pave a path of excellence and success in her future at UCLA and beyond.

THOMAS TAKES HIS TALENTS TO UCLA

by Ainsley Northrop
Editor-in-Chief

A jack of all trades, senior **Tripp Thomas** has undoubtedly established a lasting impact at LGHS. Whether he is wowing crowds with his music, succeeding in some of the school’s most difficult courses, or striving to help others, Thomas does it all with unwavering dedication and an open mind.

Since he was young, Thomas has thrived in STEM, so his decision to pursue engineering came naturally. He reasoned, “Engineering was a solid option to continue being creative with science, math, and physics.” Next year, Thomas is attending the University of California – Los Angeles (UCLA) to study aerospace engineering. He described his choice: “I’ve always had a deep affinity for space, you know, the cosmos – it’s cool stuff.” Thomas is particularly looking forward to UCLA’s academic prestige and in-state location not far from the beach – an aspect ideal for his surfing hobby.

One of Thomas’s most notable contributions to LGHS has been AdvocATS, a peer-to-peer group he started last year to help students transition to high school. He recalled that “there were a lot of things that weren’t talked about” in pre-high school advising and explained, “For example...when you go to high school, a lot of the time your friend group will evolve and shift. I didn’t remember hearing about that in middle school, so I got together with peers,

and...we just did it.” Since its start, AdvocATS has supported middle school students with real, accessible advice; the group presented at Fisher Middle School last year, and they have another visit planned.

Beyond AdvocATS, Thomas is an active member of the community; he publicizes student voices as a member of LGHS Reality Check, works as a tutor and markets for their company, and plays water polo on the school’s varsity team.



One of Thomas’s newest endeavors, however, is the band that he started with seniors **Luca Difu**, **Nick Buller**, and **Sean Iversen** this year. He said that they focus on rock music, and one of their current favorite songs to play is Everlong by the Foo Fighters. “We really only had a few weeks to practice for [our first performance], but now we’ve been playing for six plus months, and... our rhythm that we have together is definitely a lot more elevated,” he elaborated. Thomas plays the guitar, an instrument he taught himself to play as a freshman.

Reflecting on his inspirations, Thomas deemed his grandfather his biggest role model. He explained, “He really instilled in me this idea that serving others is something that isn’t just important – it’s a need that you have to have in your life... And I take that with me wherever I go.” He continued, “Starting AdvocATS was something

to help serve the community, and that’s not only fulfilling...it’s my duty as a human being.” This philosophy also influenced Thomas’s intent to join UCLA’s Engineers Without Borders program where, in his words, engineers “go into the world and do good with their skills, not looking for money, just fulfillment for other humans.”

Looking back on high school, Thomas championed the importance of open-mindedness, advising, “If you have an opportunity, try not to waste it.” He concluded, “Everything starts as a small little idea, and if you’re willing to give it your full attention, even just for a little bit, [even though] more often than not you might fail, it’s honorable. It’s valiant to at least try.”



ROBINSON EXCELS IN HIS ATHLETICS

by Rory Zeman and Owen Fugit
Media Production Editor and Editor-in-Chief

Los Gatos High School senior **Brayden Robinson** is skating his way through his final few months of high school. From rigorous classes at school to a demanding schedule at work and for hockey, Robinson is poised to end his time at LGHS on a high note.

Starting hockey later than most junior players did not hinder Robinson’s aspirations, as he made the LGHS hockey team in his sophomore year after a brief hiatus as a result of COVID-19 restrictions. However, Robinson didn’t stop there; he plays club hockey for the Santa Clara Blackhawks and recently participated in a Colorado State hockey camp. Robinson helped the LGHS team make it all the way to the state championship, where they unfortunately lost in overtime. His club team also found success despite a disappointing end to the season, as they missed going to the playoffs by only one point.

As for his college career, Robinson is going to continue to bring the same intensity he had throughout high school. After amazing performances in his Colorado State University (CSU) hockey camp, Robinson believes he has “a pretty good chance to make one of their teams” and wants to continue to play club hockey throughout college. As for his college decision, Robinson landed on CSU after a tough decision between that school and Michigan State. He narrowed it down to these two colleges because of the appeal of their colder climates and more hockey-centered cultures, noting that “I don’t really like the weather in California. I like colder weather. Colorado is not too far away.

We’ve got a lot of family friends there.” Robinson’s final choice to attend CSU ultimately came down to the relative proximity and the cost, as he earned “a nice Western Undergraduate Exchange scholarship there, and...was looking to go out of state.”

Outside of school, Robinson works two hockey-related jobs – one as a coach for younger students and the other as an employee at a hockey retail store. He explained that “the kids are always kind of crazy, kind of difficult to handle sometimes, but I enjoy coaching.” Robinson elaborated, “I think it’s nice to kind of teach them how to play and just try to inspire the next generation of hockey players. I started pretty late, but these kids are starting when they’re much younger, and they definitely have a better chance to go and be better than me.”

Reflecting on his time at LGHS, Robinson said, “I came here from Dartmouth and knowing literally zero people, except for a couple people from my one year of online school at CT English,” and enjoyed “starting from zero and meeting a lot of people, and making a lot of new friends.” One of Robinson’s personal goals for his college career is to “stay on the hockey team for all four years just because I enjoy playing it.” He reasoned, “It’ll keep me active, it’ll keep me fit.”

With hockey at the forefront of his ambitions, Robinson is sure to go far physically, mentally, and academically at CSU.



Davis pursues passion for fencing

by Fuyu Banno
Graphics Editor

Senior **Bonnie Davis** is racing to the finish line as she concludes her high school career. Through excellence in balancing national fencing competitions, academic rigor, and her various hobbies, Davis will leave Los Gatos High School full of accomplishments and proud moments.

Davis pursues fencing as a seasoned athlete, competing nationally and teaching locally. Davis first discovered fencing at a summer camp around eight years ago, which her mother, who used to fence, signed her up for. Having left the camp with a newfound passion for the sport, she has continued to show greatness and is currently competing in national individual and team events. Recently, Davis left a stunning record at the North American Cup, a national fencing competition. Her team placed first while Davis herself placed top sixteen for juniors. Because fencing is a particularly unusual sport, Davis enjoys the smaller size of the sport, allowing her to gain travel experience as she goes to different competitions. Outside of competitions, Davis takes her fencing skills to her community as a part-time coach at the Silicon Valley Fencing Center.

Committed to the University of California San Diego (UCSD), Davis has her sights set on continuing to leave an impact in fencing at the university. At UCSD, Davis hopes to expand her academic

knowledge as well. Influenced by her interest in psychology, she plans to major in Cognitive Science in the fall. Her excitement about such a complex topic is reflected in the course load she is taking as a senior, including AP Statistics, Anatomy and Physiology, AP Biology, Social Justice, and AP Government & Honors Economics.

Between fencing competitions and a rigorous course load, Davis maintains a balance with new interests and old hobbies. Davis talked about how she is trying to take on crocheting, something she had tried to get into in the past, as a good way to relax and calm down. Davis also enjoys cafe hopping, something she has done for some time. As a cafe connoisseur, Davis notes that Cupertino boasts the best cafes. When asked about her personal favorite, Davis pointed to the matcha at Academia Coffee.

In her final weeks at LGHS, Davis recalls that her experience in high school has taught her to achieve a healthy school-life balance. Davis offers wisdom to any underclassmen who still have a long way to go. As a social butterfly who enjoys hanging out with her friends in her free time Davis deeply values these connections, as she advised: “Definitely find a group of people who support you and who are honest and good people. If you feel like they aren’t the right people for you, then don’t be afraid to let go and step away.”



Senior Kyra Cherlopalle leaves a lasting impact on LGHS

by Ainsley Northrop
Editor-in-Chief

A strong force in the classroom, on the waters, and within the community, senior **Kyra Cherlopalle** is finishing her time at LGHS strong. Whether she is advocating for environmental awareness, racing across the LG reservoir, or just being a stand-out friend, Cherlopalle does it with dedication and a smile.

Cherlopalle spends the bulk of her time at the Los Gatos Rowing Club (LGRC), competing as a coxswain for the men's team. Cherlopalle detailed, "We used to walk our dog around the reservoir, and my mom signed me up during the summer of eighth grade, and I haven't stopped since." She continued, "They needed a new cox, so I stepped up, and I just loved it."

Cherlopalle described her role as "basically a bridge between the coach and the athletes on the water," as she manages race plans, directs steering, and ensures unity and control within her boats. According to Cherlopalle, some of the biggest things she has gained through coxing are

interpersonal skills and leadership experience. She reasoned, "One thing doesn't work for everyone, and I talk to people one-on-one and find solutions."

Cherlopalle emphasized that coxing did not come naturally to her, reminiscing on the beginning of her career: "I knew I was supposed to give motivation and yell, but I thought that was embarrassing. One time, the only thing I could say the entire time was 'push,' and in the end, one of my best friends now told me, 'Kyra, you're making it sound like we're giving birth.'" Cherlopalle joked, "That was probably the worst thing I could've said, but it's so funny to look back on. I've evolved so much."

Throughout her time on the team, Cherlopalle has earned several accolades. One of her favorite memories with LGRC is when her team won Head of the Charles, the largest 5k regatta in the world. She explained, "It's something I'll carry with me for the rest of my life."

Outside of the boats, Cherlopalle heads LGHS's Green Team peer-to-peer group, which champions environmental conscientiousness.



Cherlopalle emphasized the importance of aiding the environment, sharing, "We talk with other schools, the city, and the school board. It gives us a lot of experience with planning and communication." This year, the Green Team visited Van Meter Elementary to facilitate early learning about climate change and recycling, and they have upcoming visits to other local elementary schools this May. Cherlopalle recalled the group's partnership with Tree-Plenish as well as their pickleball team bonding as some of her favorite memories with the group.

Next year, Cherlopalle will attend the University of California San Diego, where she will continue rowing as a coxswain for their men's team and major in nanoengineering or another tech-related field. While rowing on the college level will keep her busy, she expressed particular excitement for student-run engineering clubs. Cherlopalle also plans to continue her hobbies of reading and hiking.

Reflecting on her high school experience, Cherlopalle advised, "Be good at what you can do – don't overextend yourself. That's something I had to learn the hard way. Sometimes you just have to take a step back and be really good at things within your capacity instead of trying to overshoot." She concluded, "Make a decision and stick by it, and you can change it in the future. I'd rather look forward and change than look back and regret."

Senior Julia Luckow can do it all

by Emery Curtis
Graphics Editor

After moving 18 times around California, senior **Julia Luckow** describes her life as a "melting pot" with each place introducing new people, styles, and sounds. "What I wore, who I hung out with, what I listened to, it all changed depending on where I was. And I liked that." Because of this, Luckow has many creative outlets and interests, including skating, wrestling, fixing bikes, and drawing.

Luckow's roots trace back to San Francisco, where she lived for seven years. San Francisco's culture sparked her love for skating, music, and art. "Once you scratch the surface with skating, everything else falls into place," she said. "It leads you to new brands, old home videos, and music that becomes the soundtrack to your life."

Luckow started wrestling not for the spotlight but for the accountability it offered. "I was already wired to be focused and independent," she explains. "Wrestling didn't give me discipline, it just gave me the space to use it." She loved the all-or-nothing aspect of the sport. With no one to blame but herself on the mat, Luckow found a deeper motivation through this sport that has helped her succeed in her academics, her job, and overall life.

She admitted that she only had her bike as a form of transportation. "It's how I used to get anywhere," she said. But when one of the gears got caught, she decided to buy a cheap bike manual book to try to figure it out herself. "Once I read that book, I was all in," she recalled, "I took my bike apart, rebuilt

it, and even turned it into a fixie to cut weight." After that, she started to get interested in the mechanics of how everything works. "I just really like understanding the process and making things work better." The same mindset of taking things apart and understanding the system drew Luckow to finance. She is headed to Syracuse University in the fall, where she plans to join the student-run hedge program and pursue a career in asset management.

Finance and asset management both appeal to Luckow in the same way skating or bikes do, because it's in-depth, "Just like with skating or with bikes, I want to dig deep. That's how I understand things, by doing them." Graffiti art started as a shared interest with her friends, something to pass the time. "I just draw whatever looks cool, there's really no message behind it," she stated. But when her great-grandmother passed, Luckow found a deeper meaning in the art she made through her ceramics projects for New Museum Los Gatos. She crafted a series of three pots inspired by her great-grandmother and Talavera pottery, which she kept around the house. Luckow passed down her pots to the women in her family: her mother, younger sister, and grandmother. "It helped me understand my grief, and I saw it as a way to connect across generations," she said. Although Luckow's path in life is not a straight line, for her, that is the whole point. Every twist and turn has added something new.



Palik perseveres in his last days at LG

by Hayley Strahs
News Editor

With four years of high school experience under his belt, senior **Marco Palik** possesses a clear plan for his future beyond Los Gatos High School.

In his final year at LGHS, Palik is taking six classes: AP Calculus AB, AP English Literature, Wind Ensemble, AP Government and Honors Economics, AP Statistics, and AP Physics C. To his surprise, Palik's favorite course is by far AP English Literature, admitting, "At the beginning of senior year, I thought that AP English Literature would be the hardest class I would ever take in high school." However, through exploring "literary devices and poetic devices and how they shape works of literature and poetry," Palik discovered his appreciation for fiction, especially the works of Toni Morrison. When his teacher, **Paris DeSoto**, assigned Morrison's *Beloved*, Palik took it upon himself to read the book four times. He reflected, "Every time I finished [*Beloved*], I just felt like I wanted to read through it again to catch any things I may have missed." Even though he plans on pursuing STEM in the future, Palik's experience in his senior year English class will continue to affect him for the rest of his life.

Between his analysis of creative writing and performances in band, Palik is truly a man of the arts. Almost every day, Palik wears his distinctive marching band jacket with pride around LGHS. Back in 2013, Palik picked up the trumpet, which he would continue to play until 2021 when former LGHS band

director Andrew Hill convinced him to switch instruments. Now, Palik plays the euphonium in Wind Ensemble, the most advanced band class at LGHS. After his fourth and final marching band season at LGHS, Palik reveled in "how fulfilling it feels at the end of the day to commit to such a task that most people would think, 'why even bother committing to that?'"

As graduation approaches, Palik's professional goals are starting to take shape. This fall, he will begin the next chapter of his life at UC Berkeley, majoring in Applied Mathematics and Computer Science. However, his educational objectives will not stop there; Palik plans on attending medical school and pursuing a career in neuroscience biotechnology. Specifically, his goal is "to develop a new software, create new machinery, or innovate [on existing] machinery... something that can help reduce the impact of brain disorders like Parkinson's and Alzheimer's." With such aspirations in mind, Palik intends to work hard and pursue as many internships and career opportunities as possible. In tandem with a dedicated work ethic, he strongly advocated for LGHS students to prioritize a balanced lifestyle: "Simply driving yourself to a breaking point all for a university or just any achievement in general just isn't as worth it as you think, and that's coming from a UC Berkeley student."

From his past adventures in band to his future prospects in the medical field, Palik's journey has only just begun.



Future Doctor Michael Hein details his upcoming plans

by Kayla Mitchell and Isabella Langner
Media Production and People Editors

Senior **Michael Hein** has made the most out of his four years at Los Gatos High School. With a record of impressive grades and a strong commitment to his passions, Hein has embraced every chance to excel in school. During his time at LG, Hein has formed lasting friendships with his classmates and his sports team that have contributed to his high school experience. Whether competing with the tennis team, engaging in extracurriculars and clubs, or simply enjoying day-to-day life with his friends, Hein has created memories and learned lessons that will stay with him during the next chapters of his life.

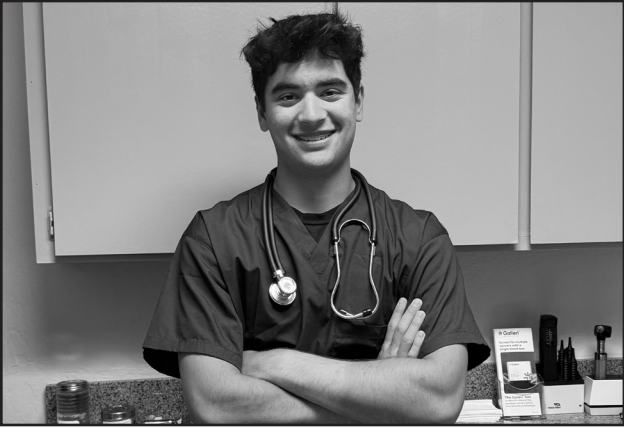
Hein is looking forward to attending the University of Southern California this fall. Upon starting the school year, he intends on joining new clubs and groups to continue exercising passions he discovered in high school. Hein is majoring in human development and aging and plans on continuing into medical school after graduating. Hein's close relationship with his parents, who are both doctors, motivated him to follow the pre-med path. After doing internships at his parents' office and researching classes at USC, Hein decided to pursue a career in medicine, specifically targeting internal medicine when he is older. Reflecting on what he learned during his internships, Hein said, "I learned a lot at my parents' office shadowing the assistants, taking blood pressure, and observing how everything works in a medical environment." When asked how this experience motivated him to pursue medicine, Hein shared, "The interactions with the patients after helping them was the best part. That definitely convinced me that following the pre-med path was the right choice."

At LGHS, Hein has a heavy course load with AP Literature, AP Government and Honors Economics, AP Biology, and Introduction to Music Theory. Alongside these, Hein is enrolled at West Valley Community College, where he is taking Statistics. He also plays a key role on the boys' varsity tennis team. You can often see Hein sporting a jacket he designed himself, featuring LGHS's mascot and his name on the back. The jacket displays two stars on the front, a white star earned last year after winning doubles in the varsity league championship and an orange star for being varsity's most valuable player during Hein's junior year. He also added three tennis

rackets, demonstrating his three years of being on the varsity team. At the end of this season, Hein will add a fourth and final racket.

Hein also dabbles in music, playing the electric guitar. He began playing alongside his friend and would often spend time in the garage outside playing together. Hein enjoys dedicating his time to the community, involving himself in Boys Team Charity since sixth grade. His favorite spots to volunteer are House of Hope and Sacred Heart.

From dedicating his time to music, medicine, volunteering, and school, Hein has had a lot on his plate for the past four years. Despite his packed schedule, he continues to work with passion and commitment, ensuring a very bright future.



- LG baseball concludes season
- Brennan and Steiner win POY

LGHS Boys' Tennis finishes their season with hard fought loss

by Kayla Mitchell

Media Production Editor

Within the past few weeks, the Los Gatos Boys' tennis team finished its competition for the year. After completing the last couple of regular season matches and competing well in league finals, the team continued on to represent LGHS in the Central Coast Section (CCS) tournament. A close match in the second round of the team tournament concluded the tennis season, but the players ended the year as a tight-knit team with an overall winning record.

The boys' tennis team celebrated their senior night on Apr. 24 at a home match against Wilcox. All six seniors on the team played in the lineup while their teammates enthusiastically supported them from the sidelines. While the team narrowly lost the match 3-4, it was a tough fight all the way through. Junior **Ethan Beal** played an especially impressive match in singles two, winning a long battle in the third set tiebreaker 14-12. After the match, the seniors were celebrated by their younger teammates with posters covered in their action shots and gift baskets with tennis-themed gifts inside. With food and funny speeches, senior night was an upbeat bonding experience for the whole team.

After finishing the last regular season matches, the boys proceeded into league finals competing for a spot in the CCS draw. Senior **Michael Hein** and teammate Beal also competed in the singles portion of league finals as the number one and two seeds, respectively. Hein won multiple tough matches in the singles draw and eventually claimed the league finals singles title. In the doubles portion of the tournament, junior **Oliver Nigen** and freshman **Alex Fador**, alongside brothers senior **Yoav Manor** and freshman **Omri Manor** put up a strong fight against advanced opponents but were not able to win the tournament.

The tough loss to Wilcox on senior night put a spot for the LGHS boys' team in CCS at jeopardy, but the team's impressive ranking from the season qualified them for the tournament. In the first round of CCS, LG competed against Stevenson High School. Hein commented on the match, "The entire team drove down to Pebble Beach in a van which was a really fun experience. We were all confident and excited because we had beat them earlier in the season during a scrimmage." The LG team defeated the Stevenson players 4-3 and advanced to play Saratoga High School in the second round. While the overall score of the match against Saratoga was 1-6 in favor of the opposing team, the LGHS players fought hard and competed extremely well in

difficult singles lines. The loss to Saratoga officially ended the spring tennis season for most of the players on the team. While LG will not be represented in the doubles portion of CCS, Hein will continue to compete for LG in the singles draw.

The boys' tennis team ended their season by celebrating their senior players and fighting resolutely in CCS. Ending with an overall winning record and a high ranking in the team's league, the LGHS tennis players are ready to set down their rackets for the summer.



BASELINE: A Los Gatos tennis player receives and returns a ball behind the line.

Lacrosse concludes valiantly

by Atharava Pandey

National/World Editor

After a long and prosperous season, Los Gatos High School Varsity Boys' Lacrosse ended with a strong 8-2 record, second in the league. Successful results for the team include May 9, when the team beat Aptos High School 18-3. Another win for the team was on May 8 when they beat Palma High School 11-5. Of their team's memorable moments, junior midfielder **Ben Reilly** said, "Definitely beating Bellarmine. That was a big one. Like we haven't done that in a couple of years now." Although the team suffered a loss to Archbishop Mitty High School in the Central Coast Section (CCS) semifinals on May 15, they have a lot to be proud of, producing many iconic moments throughout the season.



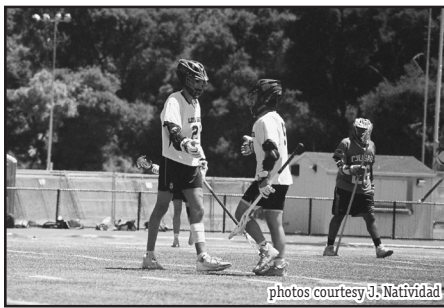
CHEMISTRY: Two Wildcats chest bump to celebrate a hard goal.

Also having a productive season, Los Gatos Varsity Girls finished with a solid 8-4 league record, the third seed in the Santa Clara Valley Athletic League (SCVAL). Recently, the team's successes included beating Los Altos High School 19-10 on May 7 and then Saratoga High School 13-6 on May 9. The varsity girls had shaken off some of their struggles in the middle of the season, relying on their deep connection with each other. According to sophomore midfielder **Shyla Werdebaugh**, "Our team's chemistry isn't the same as other teams. We all have a strong bond, and this program reminds me of a family." Although the team suffered a close loss to Archbishop Mitty High School with a score of 7-8 in the CCS semifinals, the Wildcats fought valiantly.

The Los Gatos Junior Varsity Boys have had a historically successful season this year. According to sophomore attacker **Nolan Campion**, "This was probably my favorite season ever. Our chemistry is really good. I know everyone on the team, and we just always have a good time at practice." This excitement to play with the team has translated well to the field, with the boys posting a dominant 9-1-1 record. Although their season is officially over, the JV boys have definitely done themselves proud. Their best moment of the season was arguably their win against Bellarmine College Preparatory on Apr. 4. Make sure to congratulate them on a commanding season.

The Los Gatos Junior Varsity Girls have put in a lot of hard work this year and have improved greatly over the course of the season. The team recently clinched a memorable victory over Los Altos High School on May 7 with a score of 8-7. Other successful moments for the team included their close win against Mountain View High School on Apr. 23, with a score of 6-5. The JV girls will look forward to building the team next season.

All four of our teams have officially capped off their successful seasons. Make sure to congratulate all teams on a productive year and wish those returning next year another strong season. Keep supporting our teams as they make us proud! (Sources: MaxPreps, Sports Illustrated)



GO WILDCATS: LG players dap each other up after a goal.

LG baseball advances to CCS

by Britt Melinauskas and Chloe Wilson

Sports and Humor Editors

On May 16, the Los Gatos Varsity Baseball team secured first place in the DeAnza League despite one loss to the Wilcox Chargers. Their notable 13-1 record led them to advance in their non-league endeavors as they defeated Carmel High School 8-5 on May 17. Last year, the Wildcats lost 3-7, a record that ultimately knocked them out of the Central Coast Section (CCS) playoffs. Due to the commitment of both JV and varsity teams as well as an astounding performance in the league, they will compete in the CCS Division I. In previous rankings by Cal-Hi Sports, the Wildcats placed fifth among the top ten teams in the Bay Area, proving their perseverance through intense competition.



SIDELINE: Wildcat players wait in the dugout to be subbed.

The LGHS annual senior night was held on May 9, with the Wildcats performing to their highest ability for each senior, showcasing their undeniable abilities. Senior **Baker Robinson** impacted multiple field parts, such as pitching an inning without running or hitting. On the plate, he had one run and one triple, with senior **Justin Mazzaferro** also battling for one triple and two runs. Senior pitcher **Tre Golino** earned a 1-for-3 with two runs batted in (RBI), one triple, and one run, further highlighting his talent as a future Bear for the University of California, Berkeley.

Sophomore **Blake Mordaunt** explained that the seniors "teach us to work hard, and to stay after practice in the cages." When comparing the competition between JV and varsity, junior **Chase Oberthier** said, "It's a lot different. There's a lot of

way better competition. My boy Tre has really taken me under his wing, taught me a lot, and just helped me throughout this season." As the team reflects on their current season, each player comments on the resilience the seniors have demonstrated to lead them into their current victorious position.

The team defeated Wilcox, a team ending third in the league, on May 14; this defeat was especially satisfying as Wilcox has proven to be a prominent opponent for the Wildcats. Both teams have battled this season: the Wildcats have earned a 2.6 average of allowed runs compared to the Chargers being 2.8. Oberthier commented, "I [was] excited to play Wilcox, you know, it's a big rivalry." Even with great pride and optimism for a victory, LGHS baseball was defeated 3-4 against the Chargers on May 16.

As Los Gatos enters into CCS playoffs, Mordaunt described the team's mentality: "We will just carry this energy into the playoffs." Oberthier added, "Our motivation for the playoffs is just that we will be dominant in CCS and that we're going to go far." Last year, the LGHS varsity team fell short in the first round of CCS, but this season there is a renewed sense of drive and determination, setting the tone for upcoming matches. Heading into the playoffs, Los Gatos secures the number three seed in Division I and faces Bellarmine College Preparatory.

With the top priority of attaining a high seed in the CCS and Norcal playoffs, the LGHS varsity baseball team will continue to showcase its talent and valiant efforts. Come out and support varsity boys' baseball as they head into CCS! (Sources: Cal-Hi Sports, MaxPreps)



SAFE: A Wildcat player runs to first base after a great hit.

Boys' volleyball makes open division of CCS for the first time

by Isabella Langner

People Editor

As they near the end of their season, the LGHS Boys' Volleyball Team can look back at their performance with pride in their accomplishments. The 2025 roster has proven their remarkable talent through a second-place finish in league, and most importantly, the first-ever Open Division qualification in the Central Coast Section (CCS) in the program's history. This season marks the first year that boys' volleyball will compete in the highest level of CCS competition, confirming that their hard work paid off.



HUDDLE UP: Los Gatos teammates group up to refocus for their final possession.

The team ended their season with an impressive 18-10 overall record, and an 11-4 record in league, putting them in second place. On Apr. 21, they played Homestead at home, a team they had lost to earlier in the season. Since then, LGHS has been putting in rigorous effort to improve their skills, leading them to a 3-1 victory. Their next match versus Monta Vista ended in a 3-0 victory for Los Gatos. Once again, LGHS played Homestead on Apr. 30 but lost in a close game. However, for the last three games of the season, boys' volleyball locked in and dominated the remaining teams. They won 3-0 in their match against Cupertino, and 3-1 versus Harker and Monta Vista.

Earlier in the season, many players declared that beating The Harker School was a main goal of theirs. Juniors **Sean Slover** and **Gracin Ting** both expressed their excitement to play Harker because they were familiar with the coaches and players. They also shared that Harker is a talented school, exemplified by their first-place finish in league, which made LGHS's victory even more impressive. According to Ting, "It was a pretty good statement win. Before that game, we were 0-2 against them, but both games were pretty close so it felt good to beat them."

Los Gatos traveled to Santa Cruz High School on May 13 to play in the quarterfinals of CCS. Junior **Reily Nguyen** shared, "I think it is going to be a tough game, since we're kind of the lower seed coming into it. It is a seventh vs. second matchup. They're a pretty good team, but I think we could pull off an upset today." Players all expressed excitement to be playing in the Open Division of CCS. Due to their hard work, boys' volleyball pulled off a 3-1 victory over Santa Cruz

High School. Junior **Nolan Harr** reflected, "We definitely achieved our goals this season, with placing second in the league, moving up from last year, and making the open division for CCS which has never been done before."

The LGHS Boys' Volleyball Team is celebrating a successful season due to their performance. Harr expressed content in his growth this season, saying: "I improved on my defense this year. I didn't play all the way around last year, but I got to this year, and I got a lot better at it." Alongside improving their skills, boys' volleyball also grew a lot closer as a team. From spending hours at practices and tournaments to after-school bonding, players have made lasting connections with teammates.



REJECTED: Los Gatos middle blockers and opposite jump high to defend a hit.

El Gato’s POY: Scotty Brennan and Nicole Steiner

by **Isabella Langner and Kloe Adams**
People and Editorial Editors

Senior **Scotty Brennan** began his Los Gatos High School career unsure of what his future held and is now graduating, leaving a legacy. Throughout his four years here, Brennan has made an incredible impact on his teammates, coaches, and various sports. He plans to take his talents to the University of Arizona (U of A), playing Division I football and pursuing his passion for the sport.

Brennan began playing football in his freshman year. Although he grew up around the sport, flag football was the closest he came to playing tackle before high school. Despite never playing tackle, Brennan found a love for the sport, leading him all the way to his senior year, where he started as quarterback on varsity. Brennan’s favorite aspect of LG’s football team has been the brotherhood. Brennan commented, “No one’s like LG. We’re a public school and you don’t see public schools winning like we did.” Reflecting on his four years on the team, Brennan’s favorite memory playing football was beating Archbishop Riordan High School. He stated, “No one thought we were going to win. It was a dog-fight but LG scored the winning touchdown.”

Alongside football, Brennan has also always been involved in basketball. His impact on the team was undeniable, as he helped them finish first in league play as the third-highest scorer on the team. During his junior year, LGHS once again won league and Brennan played an impressive role in achieving this feat. Brennan elaborated upon his favorite memory from that year, winning CCS: “I’d been playing with the seniors since I was a freshman, so I had really good relationships with them. It was just fun to get one win with them.”

Brennan made sure to make his mark during his last year of basketball at the high school, leading most of the team stats and making first team all

league. Although he will not be playing basketball at the collegiate level, Brennan will be sure to make time for the sport: “One hundred percent I will be hooping all the time.”

His biggest inspiration is his dad, to whom he attributes much of his success and motivation. He said, “He works a lot, his job isn’t easy, and he’s away from family a lot. I also appreciate my mom for making the sacrifice to stay here and not be with her husband in Arizona, for letting me finish senior year and pursue athletics here.” Brennan also thanked his coaches for being fantastic mentors: “They were hard on me, they pushed me. They knew that if I wasn’t at my full potential, they could get on me about it and I could take it and apply it to my game and make it better. All four of my coaches did that with me: Coach **[Mark] Krail**, Coach **[Nicholas] De Martini**, Coach **Nick [Ward]**, and Coach **[Steve] Seandel**.”

For the next four years, as a Wilbur Wildcat, Brennan is most excited for “the culture around the team.” He added, “I already know a bunch of the guys, and they’re all super cool, so I’m excited just to get closer with them.” Brennan plans to major in business or sports management. “I love sports. I’ve been in sports my whole life, so I feel like it’d be good for me. But the business side of it is good because it’s what the world runs on,” he noted.

Throughout his career at LGHS, Brennan has consistently impacted the community through his hard work and dedication. While Los Gatos is sad to see Brennan leave, we are excited to see him pursue his next chapter.



IN ACTION: Brennan looks for his teammate to assist a play.

by **Lucy Panicacci**
Editor-in-Chief

When I think of an athlete at LGHS, I immediately think of senior **Nicole Steiner**. A three-sport varsity athlete every year of high school, Steiner appears to effortlessly balance and stand out in multiple sports.



BOX-OUT: Steiner fights the opponent for the rebound.

Throughout her four years at LGHS, Steiner played varsity volleyball, basketball, and track and field. In addition, she was on both the softball and track and field teams her freshman year during the spring season. Initially, Steiner went into high school aiming to commit to a college for volleyball, dedicating her time to club year-round since seventh grade. A six-foot-one outside hitter, Steiner dominated on the volleyball court with her kills and blocks. However, as she missed basketball games for volleyball tournaments her sophomore year, Steiner realized, “I’d rather be at basketball.” In her junior year, she pivoted her focus towards basketball. Still, Steiner loved being a part of the LGHS volleyball team.

In addition to excelling at volleyball, Steiner left a historic impact on the girls’ basketball program. In total, Steiner holds ten records for LGHS basketball, including most points scored in a game, most rebounds in a career,

most blocks in a game, and the first triple-double in LG history. With her abilities, Steiner played an important part in the immense success of the Varsity Girls’ Basketball Team, helping the team win the Central Coast Championship this year. Although a consistent leading scorer, Steiner’s teammates would never think that she prioritizes her stats. Rather, they recognize her for putting the team first. While Steiner is unstoppable in the paint, she can play multiple roles on the court, helping the team break the press and creating opportunities for her teammates. With a high basketball IQ, Steiner knows when to drive to the basket or when to do her signature full-court pass to a teammate for a layup. As a team captain, Steiner brings a positive attitude to every practice and game, always building up the energy of the team or cheering the loudest.

Although a volleyball and basketball star, Steiner could just as well have pursued shot put in college. Steiner started shot put in sixth grade and then continued it in high school after her dad encouraged her to join track and field. That year, she went to states for shot put, and she now holds second place for the school record.

Steiner points to her dad, mom, and LGHS basketball coach **Sara Quilici Giles** for supporting her athletics. Recognizing her dad, LG Hall of Famer **Bill Steiner**, Steiner stated that he encourages her to pursue a variety of interests, not restricting her to one focus: “He knows that I like to do many sports and lets me keep playing multiple.”

LGHS athletics awarded Steiner the **Chris Von Saltza** Award for outstanding senior athlete of the year, encapsulating her academic and athletic excellence. Utilizing her time wisely, Steiner maintained all A’s throughout high school on top of her athletic commitments. Next year, Steiner plans to play Division I basketball at Cal State Fullerton, potentially continuing her multi-sport dominance on their track team as well.

LGHS Girls’ Varsity and JV Softball teams triumph

by **Britt Melinauskas**
Sports Editor

As the Los Gatos Girls’ Varsity and Junior Varsity (JV) Softball teams near the end of their season, they continue to conquer, with both teams clinching first place in the De Anza League. As the JV team’s season ends, they have much to be proud of, maintaining a dominant 12-0 record in league with only two non-league losses for the entire year. In the final matches, the Wildcats faced against Los Altos, Milpitas, Cupertino, Wilcox, and Mountain View High Schools. The team won with commanding scores of 17-0 against Los Altos, 16-2 against Milpitas, 7-0 against Cupertino, 18-2 against Wilcox, and 19-1 against Mountain View.

Freshman **Meera Allen** has emerged as a standout on the JV softball team this season, excelling in the pitching circle with a remarkable Earned Run Average (ERA) of 3.53, the best on the team, showcasing her skill in keeping opposing hitters in a tight error range. Meanwhile, at the plate, freshman **Monika Leaverton** has proven to be a powerhouse, leading the team with an astonishing batting average of 0.622, establishing herself as a reliable and dangerous presence in the lineup, while sophomore **Haley Betti** and Allen continued to contribute significantly to the team’s offensive efforts. Betti performed with a strong batting average of 0.543 and Allen with an average of 0.500. All three girls played pivotal roles in the team’s overall success this season. Betti especially has shone leading in total home runs for the JV team.



SAY CHEESE: The varsity softball team poses after being seeded first in league.

For the Los Gatos Wildcats, sophomore **Ava Norquist** pitched a 3.00 ERA and 1.54 On-Base Average against Milpitas on May 6, leading to a 6-4 win against the Trojans. The varsity team ended their 2025 season with a complete sweep over Wilcox on May 13, scoring 6-4, and they culminated league play with a 11-1 victory over Mountain View on May 15.

Before the varsity team’s game against Mountain View, Los Gatos High School held its annual senior night to celebrate those graduating. Seniors **Annika Norquist**, **Ria Sharma**, **Addison Sorto**, **Clare Torres**, **Lily Young**, and **Robyn Young** conclude their high school careers at LGHS, leaving behind a legacy of determination and anticipation of a grand victory as they move on to their next chapters. Of the six seniors, two players are entering the NCAA for college softball. Norquist will pursue her dreams of Division I softball, beginning her freshman year at the University of California, Davis, as a catcher and first baseman. Similarly, Sorto will continue her softball career as a third baseman, catcher, and outfielder at Whittier College, a Division III school. The varsity team ended the season first in league standings with an impressive record of 11-1 during its entirety.

Subsequently, the varsity team enters the open division in the Central Coast Section (CCS) with hopes of continuing through the Northern California playoffs and state championships. Be sure to cheer them on as they wrap up their incredible season with pride, energy, and determination!

LGRC prepares for nationals after qualifying

by **Julia Valencia**
People Editor

As they are entering their post-season final stretch, a select group of Los Gatos Rowing Club (LGRC) junior athletes are preparing for their biggest regatta of the year, the Youth National Championships (YNC).

Earlier this month, LGRC swept the competition after a tremendous performance at Southwest Youth Championships (SWYC) on Lake Natoma in Sacramento, the YNC qualifier for youth rowing clubs in California, Utah, Nevada, Arizona, and Hawaii. Over the three-day regatta, many athletes competed in more than one event and most raced upwards of six times in Sacramento. Not only did LGRC have the

most entries across events, but they also brought home the sculling trophy, an award given to the team that wins the most sculling races, for the first time.

At SWYC, the top four boats from grand finals compete at YNC, but even getting to grand finals is an achievement. The first day of racing is time trials, where only the top 14 boats make it to the semifinals. At semifinal racing, the top three boats from each heat go to the final race, where only four of them will make it to Nationals in Florida.

LGRC brought home the most trophies they have in a while, winning seven first-place finishes across both the men’s and women’s teams, ranking them third overall in the team point category. Some but not all of the medals won by the women’s team include first in the under-16 eight, the youth second varsity (2V) quad, and the youth 2V double. They also earned second place in the under-17 quad, the youth double, and the youth 2V double. The men’s team won first in the youth quad, youth 2V quad, under-17 quad, and under-16 quad, among other events. They also won third place in the youth eight, breaking a 12-year medal stagnation in the event.

LGRC will be sending 14 boats as well as 66 rowers and coxswains, to YNC. Eight boats from the men’s team and six boats from the women’s team will travel to Sarasota, Florida, right after the end of the school year to compete. Last year at YNC, LGRC won the men’s youth quad, and both the men’s and women’s 2V quads. They also placed top eight in almost every other event in which they had entered a boat. The coaches at LGRC are expecting nothing less than excellence from their athletes at the upcoming YNC, particularly a win in the youth quad and placing first and second in the youth 2V quad. This year, LGRC anticipates adding even more trophies to their award box at their boathouse.

As their training ramps up for the next five weeks before nationals, LGRC athletes will have to balance their final weeks of classes alongside grueling practices six days a week. Make sure to tune in and cheer on all LGHS students competing with LGRC in Florida! (Sources: Regatta Central, US Rowing)



CELEBRATION TIME: LGRC WYB 4X earns first seed and a ticket to Nationals.



POSE: The LGRC Men’s U17 eight places second in the Southwest Region.



MEET THE PRESS

Volume 99 Number 9

www.elgatonews.com

Wednesday, May 28, 2025



Advisor
Paris "Partially Edited By" DeSoto



Editor-in-Chief
Owen "Story Liker" Fugit



Editor-in-Chief
Ainsley "Star" Northrop



Editor-in-Chief
Margo "Dictator" Rawlings



Editor-in-Chief
Lucy "Brainrot" Panicacci



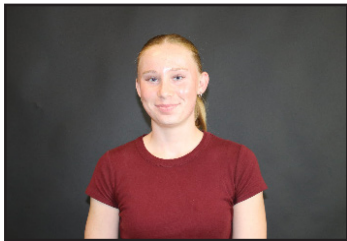
News Editor
Kat "Crossword Conqueror" Littfin



News Editor
Siyona "Screentime" Singhal



News Editor
Hayley "Cafe Hopper" Strahs



Opinion Editor
Sam "Car Crasher" Gruetter



Opinion Editor
Dylan "Linkedin" Wadhwa



Nat/World Editor
Katie "Doodle" Borders



Nat/World Editor
Quinn "Pre-September Folder" Hathaway



Nat/World Editor
Atharava "Sports Center" Pandey



Center Editor
Katie "S'mores Clusters" Nelson



Editorial Editor
Kloe "Pigeon Thief" Adams



Sports Editor
Jordan "GSD" Park



Sports Editor
Britt "The Machine" Melinauskas



Sports Editor
Sahil "Here in Spirit" Muthukrishnan



People Editor
Isabella "Go on a Walk" Langner



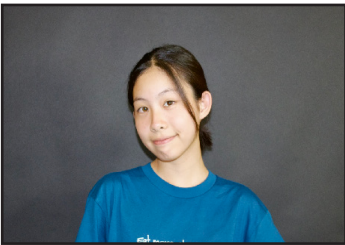
People Editor
Julia "Token Rower" Valencia



Graphics Editor
Emery "Hook 'em" Curtis



Graphics Editor
Annabelle "Vitamin D Deficient" Pan



Graphics Editor
Fuyu "Shin Chan" Banno



Humor Editor
Nelson "Horton" Kramer



Humor Editor
Chloe "Clean Girl" Wilson



Culture Editor
Megan "Baked Goods Goddess" Saul



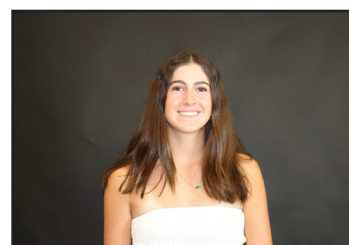
Culture Editor
Claudia "Papa's Freezeria" Casal Montserrat



Media Editor
Rory "Historian" Zeman



Media Editor
Aliya "Interlocking Toes" Koshalieva



Media Editor
Kayla "No Bad Hairdays" Mitchell



PR Manager
Jane "Ice Is My Life" Wilde



PR Manager
Megan "Tarantino" Hastings