

El Gato

THE STUDENT NEWSPAPER OF LOS GATOS HIGH SCHOOL

A. Northrop

Art students showcase their work

by Ainsley Northrop
Editor-in-Chief

On April 17 and 18, LGHS held its annual Art Electives Showcase in the community room. Open for all LGHS students and faculty to visit, this event featured a myriad of student-created pieces ranging from pottery and clothing to photography and paintings.

Among the featured artists was senior **Connor Hines**, who contributed two mixed media pieces and a landscape photo of a sunset in Death Valley to the showcase. Hines explained that Andy Warhol's "iconic screen prints of people like Marilyn Monroe" inspired one of his works, which included four self-portraits, each in a different color to symbolize a different emotion he feels about environmental degradation. He laid the portraits over news clippings related to the environment and connected them with a piece with a string, "sort of like points on a map." Hines's work centers around the environment; and his other mixed media piece in the show pictured a laser-burned oil rig with article fragments about the Huntington Beach oil spill. With ink, he added a hand-drawn sandpiper. Hines explained that this piece is a commentary on the "impact oil spills have on coastal ecosystems, especially birds."



BOWL-D DESIGN: Students taking ceramics classes exhibit detailed bowls.

At the showcase, senior **Liza Rozova's** pottery undoubtedly stood out. Rozova has been taking ceramics at LGHS for four years, and she recently began selling her work. She explained a recent commission: "My sister wanted me to make her four mugs that she saw online, and I made them." Furthermore, Rozova added that art is a way to balance her challenging course load, asserting, "[Ceramics] is a fun way to take a little bit of stress off." Rozova noted that some of her favorite pieces at the showcase were her fairy house and her blue delaware pot with intricate patterns.

Additionally, senior **Osha Moloney** has produced several exceptional pieces while at LGHS. Currently, Moloney is exploring how he can use his art to denounce social injustices and promote change - the topic of his AP portfolio. One of his featured art pieces was a mixed media cardboard piece about being a bystander to homelessness. Another work pictured a woman and a child walking past a wall reading "vote like your kids live here." Moloney created the latter digitally, in contrast to his usual style of painting. Remarking on both pieces, he stated, "I'm trying to influence people to be an upstander in this society." Moreover, Moloney explained that beyond being an outlet for expression, art creates a fun environment, and he specifically referenced his art teacher **Mark Yanowsky's** support and creative field trips.

The 2025 LGHS art showcase was an inspiring compilation of student work. Moloney advocated for the event: "I wasn't that good at art, but I worked on it and I got a lot better. So this can be something for people to look at and say 'oh, I can do this as well.'" Further describing the importance of this tradition, Hines concluded, "It's great to see what all your peers have been making throughout the school year and share that with the community. Art's a lot about sharing your ideas and communicating with the world, and this [gave us] the opportunity to do that."



IN THE ZONE: Senior **Camille Usherwood** finalizes a small oil painting.

LGHS films its annual Lip Dub

by Katie Nelson
Center Editor

On April 18, LGHS held its annual Lip Dub. The leadership team's careful planning, combined with the execution of LG students lip-syncing to some of their favorite songs created a fun-filled and memorable event that the student body greatly enjoyed.

The Lip Dub took place during tutorial, and students lined the hallways and paths of the school wearing their sports gear or representing their club or organization. Group leaders and sports captains lip-synced along to a song playing as the video camera wove through the crowds, catching the action. Immediately following the end of the songs, students rushed to the front lawn for the I Believe chant.



ON THE RUN: The girls' track and field team participates in the Lip Dub.

The leadership team planned the Lip Dub for many weeks, organizing the route, location of the groups, and picking the songs, among many other tasks. ASB Support Senior **Hannah Wells** explained how the jobs were distributed among team members: "It was a group of us working together. I kind of focused on making the presentation for the meeting, but I also helped [ASB Treasurer Senior] **Sara Niemeyer** with the map, and I helped choose the songs. [ASB Vice President Senior] **Kiana Behnami** did the lyrics, and then [ASB President Senior] **Ryan Idemoto** sent the emails and everything, so we kind of divided it up like that." Wells added that one of the best but trickiest parts was choosing songs, explaining that "we wanted the songs to feel a little more nostalgic for all the seniors, so we chose songs involved in our childhood,

like 2000's songs." Idemoto said that despite the intense coordination required, the Lip Dub was one of the events he was looking forward to planning most as president. He loves the Lip Dub because "the event itself is a demonstration of LGHS's diversity and subsequent unity. It shows how every student can find a community, and there isn't one path for someone to follow." The range of groups was one aspect that made the entire thing particularly challenging to plan. Idemoto explained, "Since it's an event that involves so many student groups, it's been challenging to coordinate and organize, especially when so many students have other responsibilities simultaneously."

Senior **Connor Hines** was the videographer for the event, and his practice filming high school sports, spirit rallies, and short films helped prepare him for the undertaking. He said he loved "getting to see the energy of the whole event from start to finish live." The preparation process was intensive, as Hines said he practiced walking the route and preparing his camera: "I used my Canon 5D Mark IV...I had to balance my gimbal, attach a neutral density filter, and connect my external monitor prior to filming." He added that the biggest challenges included keeping the camera stable, even after getting knocked off the wooden box during the I Believe chant. He concluded that "it's important for LGHS to carry on the Lip Dub tradition because it's a fun event for the whole student body to unite as one...it's very vibrant and shows off our school spirit." He elaborated that the Lip Dub "does not unify students by grade but as a whole, regardless of grade." Check out the new 2025 Lip Dub, published on YouTube and other social media platforms.



GRAND SLAM: Boys' tennis lip-syncs while using rackets as microphones.

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TOM: Michele Drouin nurtures her students' success

by **Katie Nelson and Ainsley Northrop**
Center Editor and Editor-in-Chief

Beloved teacher **Michele Drouin** continues to make an impact at LGHS, and her passion for math and her devotion to watching her students succeed undoubtedly shine through. Drouin has taught "everything from Algebra One to [AP] Calculus BC." Drouin has built a wealth of experience, reflected especially throughout her 25 years spent on the job, the last 13 years here at LGHS.

Drouin explained that in high school she hated math but started gravitating towards it in college. Because she disliked the subject and worked several years before going back to school, she said, "I had to start in Algebra One when I went to junior college because my math skills were so bad, and my transcript from high school said that I did not have the skills." Despite starting at the beginning of the math curriculum, Drouin quickly mastered the material and went on to major in math at UC Santa Cruz "for no reason other than I enjoyed it."

Following graduation, Drouin was unsure about which career to pursue, but decided she had nothing to lose by taking a one-year credential program at San José State University, as she enjoyed a fellowship program where she worked with kids as well as being a reader for some of her professors. She then interviewed at Saratoga High School and found her first teaching job there. She expressed her gratitude for former Saratoga Department Chair Bill Williams, who guided her through her first years of teaching with the goal of

preparing her to teach calculus. She said, "I was a brand new teacher and he took me under his wing. He's the one that kind of got me teaching all different classes."

Now, Drouin's favorite classes to teach are AP Calculus AB and Pre Calculus because of "the rigor of the courses and the motivation of the students [in them]." While teaching, Drouin champions the philosophy of "being comfortable with the uncomfortable." She explained, "I think it's important to let students struggle a bit, because if they're not struggling, they're not growing." Drouin also values fairness and honesty, and she always tries to check in on her students; she even writes a new motivational quote on her whiteboard at the start of every week. She reiterated the importance of supporting students: "You want to make the material accessible but challenging at the same time... Some classes have [mixed] level skills, so you want to make sure that you're [merging them] at once... It changes from year to year, and depending on the classes that I have, even from period to period."

While teaching is certainly a large part of her life, Drouin saves time for the other things she loves, too. Typically, you can find Drouin hitting up the pickleball courts, biking, reading in the evening, or hiking. She particularly adores Oregon and loves doing "anything that gets me outside." Though her treasured dog, who "used to take up all [her] time" recently passed away, she holds a special place in her heart for her. In the coming year, Drouin is excited to go on her planned summer bike tour through Slovenia and Croatia.

Drouin concluded that what she finds most rewarding is helping kids build confidence and success, even beyond math. She elaborated, "My favorite part of teaching is watching you guys get it [and]... make the connections, but [so is] watching you guys grow, not only academically, but personally, [and] just overcoming the challenges that come with taking rigorous classes and being a teenager."



FURRY FRIENDS: Drouin smiles alongside her precious dogs at the beach.

Castle Rock State Park murder investigation continues

by **Chloe Wilson**
Humor Editor

On the evening of Mar. 24, police found two slain bodies in the bed of a pickup truck on Skyline Boulevard near Castle Rock State Park. Shortly after, on Apr. 3, the Santa Clara County Medical Examiner's Office released the identities of the two homicide victims: 53-year-old Colter White and 45-year-old Sean Pfeffer, both residents of Boulder Creek. White's cause of death was multiple gunshot wounds to the torso and left upper and lower extremities; while Pfeffer died from a gunshot wound to the left chest.

Pfeffer's sister, Nicki Dorris, lamented, "I just want to know what happened. I want justice for whoever did this to him." Pertaining to the investigations of White and her brother, she stated that she had not yet heard from detectives. A week after discovering the victims, the California Highway Patrol (CHP) did not disclose any details about the incident, including weapons and suspects. CHP is investigating the incident as a double homicide but did not say if any suspects had been identified. Dorris also posted to Facebook, wanting help involving the case of her brother and White. She wrote, "If you or someone you know lives in the Boulder Creek area in

California and knows anything that can help find the people responsible for murdering my little brother, Sean Pfeffer, please call it in! He was a son, a brother, an uncle, a father, and a friend to many and did not deserve this."

White's family described him as a "great guy" and that Pfeffer was a friend of his. They also explained that White had previously had disputes with the law, but was actively working to turn his life around. A memorial appeared on the road over the weekend following their deaths, with photos, candles, and flowers at the SR 35 turnout where authorities discovered the truck and the bodies of the two men.

One day before authorities found Pfeffer, he posted a frightening entry on his Facebook account: "If today isn't work out know that it was [name withheld by Press Banner], the piece of crap that I invited to this mountain that still hasn't left it and is working the f— out of my f—ing cousin. I'm rolling down there right now [name withheld] I hope you shoot me." As his last presence on social media before his death, this post stunned followers of his account, and Dorris said she was so shocked that she even attempted to connect with Pfeffer. Additionally, Pfeffer's sister went to the length of filing a missing persons report with local authorities. Later, her mom called her and

informed her of the tragic event relating to her brother. Dorris recounted, "That was a blur moment. I just remember pleading with her that she was wrong. It was awful. It was terrible." (Sources: KTVU, Press Banner, Santa Cruz Sentinel)



CRIME SCENE: The sun shines in Castle Rock, the site of the tragedy.

Drama fosters a community

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

With the school year coming to a close, the Los Gatos High School Drama Department is ending the year off strong. The student performers recently finished their production of Mamma Mia, and they are currently preparing for their annual fundraiser, Dramatic Desserts. Despite there being no formal drama class this year, theater students have taken the lead, continuing to showcase their talents and passion for performing.



DANCE QUEENS: Orendain, Clevenger, and Sleiman pose.

Sophomore **Kay Clevenger**, who played the leading role of Donna in Mamma Mia, described their experience as incomparable: "I always thought there was kind of a bar between me being any comedic relief and then being a lead. I never thought I'd get the chance for that. So I gained confidence in myself and my abilities. When I got Donna, I was really proud of myself." They continued, explaining that the cast of Mamma Mia felt like a family. Clevenger joked, "Everyone is so strange that it's hard to feel like you stick out... It's a really great community."

Theater builds undoubtedly close friendships, something senior **Mayya Sleiman** can especially attest to. Sleiman decided to audition for Mamma Mia because she wanted to end her senior year with something new and fun. Despite never participating in high school-level theater or music before, Sleiman proved to be a natural, landing herself a substantial role as Rosie. She explained, "I didn't know anybody when we were doing auditions and everything, so I had to fully introduce myself to

like 40-something people. It was a lot, so it was a little scary at first, but everyone's super, super nice, so I got to know everyone really quickly." Sleiman added, "It was probably the most fun part of this year so far. I made so many new friends, and it [was] really enjoyable."

Inspired by her experience, Sleiman now frequents the LGHS Drama Club, which she described as a useful tool for character development during Mamma Mia: "We had club meetings where we'd come in and...spend ten minutes brainstorming about our characters. We'd write [our thoughts] down, and then we'd share them in a circle with everybody." Alongside faculty director **Tim Nielson**, students further took charge of their characters and the overall production through costume design, choreography, backstage crew responsibilities, and even scenic direction. Nielson commenced Mamma Mia's run by awarding two particularly involved students — freshmen **Devika Raj** and **Cecelia Fawcett** — the Legacy Robe Award for their commitment to the production and their positive attitudes.

Currently, the LGHS Drama Club is preparing for their Dramatic Desserts fundraiser in May, which will feature senior **Emilia Orendain's** original one act. Orendain wrote the script with inspiration from the popular Teen Beach Movie, and drama students are working to perform it in front of a live audience in the black box theater.

Be sure to come support these local thespians at Dramatic Desserts as they continue to take the lead in all things theater.



HONEY HONEY: Donna's love interests band together.

LG students travel to Europe

by **Siyona Singhal**
News Editor

Over this spring break, a group of LGHS students traveled to Spain and Portugal to learn more about culture, immerse themselves in history, and enjoy the perks of traveling with friends. AP European History and World History teacher **Stephanie Pearson**, Yearbook and Digi-photo teacher **Emily Christie**, and AP Government and yoga teacher **Christie Pacheco** organized and chaperoned the trip.

The trip was available to anyone who was interested in attending and covered many different places in Europe. Participants signed up for the trip at the beginning of the year, and with the trip finally here, students were more than excited for the excursion. When asked for her reason for joining the week-long trip, sophomore **Coralie Schubert** recalled that her parents wanted her to experience different cultures, stating, "I didn't want to choose it only because of the friends, and my mom was talking about how she really wanted [me] to see the culture. I wanted that for myself, too." After a week of amazing food, museums, and cultural events, students felt that they gained a better understanding of society in Spain and Portugal as well as created a deeper connection with their friends.



ORNATE STREET: LG students see European buildings.



GROUP PIC: Students and staff take a picture together.

The trip started off in Madrid where students stayed for two days, visiting a variety of landmarks. Students also experienced different types of activities in Madrid such as taking a leisurely bicycle tour or an authentic cooking class at nighttime for dinner. Students then traveled to Salamanca, visiting historical sites such as the El Escorial as well as a number of Cathedrals. For a special cultural experience, the students also took a Flamenco lesson at Salamanca, exercising and learning new dance skills. The trip concluded in Porto and Lisbon, where students visited sightseeing places and had a relaxing day at the beach.

Sophomore **Olivia Velton** recalled her experience on the trip, even connecting the trip to her AP European History class as well being a staff member of Yearbook: "It was a really good experience because we made a lot of friends and went to a lot of different places and it was really cool to see the history we [saw] in AP Euro. There were also a lot of photography students so it was a good experience for that as well." Velton also mentioned that her favorite part of the trip was spending the day with her friends on the beach.

Overall, the trip was a once in a lifetime experience for LGHS students. Students on the trip strongly encouraged their peers to participate in future years. When asked if he would recommend the trip, sophomore **Noah Gloege** stated, "It's definitely something I would do again, just to visit the cities because they were all very nice."

LGHS Robotics Team wraps up competition season

by **Siyona Singhal**
News Editor

Over the past several months, Team 972: Iron Claw, the LGHS Robotics Team, participated in the FIRST Robotics Competition's various regionals. The competition season kicked off on Jan. 6, and since then, robotics students have been hard at work creating the perfect robot for this year's competition game: Reefscape. To score points, teams must place fake coral on their reef, harvest mock algae, and hang from their barge before time runs out. The team worked hard for seven weeks prototyping, designing, and testing their robot to make sure they were ready for their first of three regional competitions.

The first regional competition, Pinnacles Regional, took place at Hollister High School. Students arrived on Saturday, Mar. 1, ready to cheer in the stands and watch their robot on the field for the first time. The robot had technical issues requiring team members to fix it between matches and by the end of the qualification rounds, they ranked 16th out of 35 teams. In the playoffs, the team lost in round five out of 13. The outcome was a solid start to the season, and Iron Claw was ready to improve.

25 students from Iron Claw attended the second regional competition in Sacramento, arriving on Friday, Mar. 14, to participate in practice matches. On Saturday, the team showed up at the competition ready for the qualification rounds. Students had to navigate complicated technical issues and seek help from other teams. By the end, they ranked 21st out of 34. In the playoff matches they lost in round five; however, they won the Industrial Engineering Award for their outstanding success in advancing respect and appreciation for engineering within a team's school or organization and community.

The final regional was the East Bay Regional, taking place at Berkeley High School on Saturday, Apr. 5. After relatively successful qualification matches, they had a ranking of fourth of 55 and ended up on Alliance 2. The team made it to the finals but unfortunately lost to Bellarmine's team, The Cheesy Poofs, and two more allied teams. While they didn't make it to the championship, Iron Claw was still very happy with their performance.

Senior **Arman Alasvandian**, the robot driver and an integral team member, reflected on this year's season: "I think we improved a lot in our organization and communication. As the driver, I really

enjoyed trying to help the team succeed and propel us to Houston." Alsalvadin also expressed he would miss "talking to people and the connections and relationships I have. And obviously building robots and the whole team experience." Junior **William Han** offered his opinion on the season: "This season was very tenuous, and there was a lot of work to be done, especially with the leaving of past seniors which left many of us uncertain. However, I really enjoyed when we got into the finals at East Bay Regional because it was fulfilling." Han's favorite regional was the "Sacramento Regional because I was able to engage in a lot of team bonding at the hotel." Senior **Henry Lee** expanded on his favorite aspects of robotics that he would miss: "I'm probably going to miss the people the most and the community and friendship that we have. Also having access to all the machines and being able to work with people to solve problems." Of his favorite moments, Lee highlighted those times "in the pits when we're really hectic and struggling to finish something right before a match. The adrenaline rush is really fun." He added, "Another favorite moment is when the autonomous routine works during a competition because it's the culmination of all the sub-teams."

Overall, Iron Claw had an amazing 2025 competition season, making incredible progress and putting in an enormous amount of time, effort, and hard work into their robot. They can't wait to take on next year!



GAME ON: Students wheel the robot onto the field.

Students travel to Taiwan

by **Hayley Strahs**
News Editor

On April 4, the Los Gatos High School and Saratoga High School Chinese Language Departments sent a total of twelve students to Taiwan for a seven-day educational trip, filled with sightseeing and hands-on educational activities which expanded upon students' knowledge of Chinese language and culture.



SAY CHEESE: The group poses for a pre-trip picture.

Of the program's twelve participants, six were from LGHS, including junior **Day Berenbaum**. Prior to his junior year at LGHS, Berenbaum lived in East Asia for ten years, residing and attending school in Singapore. Berenbaum explained, "I missed Asia a lot, so I figured [this trip] would be a good chance to come back for a bit and immerse myself in the culture and everything that I missed." In addition to reconnecting with his past, Berenbaum also made friends with some students at New Taipei Municipal BeiDa High School during a one-day exchange with the school's students. Despite sitting through an advanced linear algebra class in Chinese, which he described as "terrifying," Berenbaum reflected, "I'm still in touch with some of [the students]. We were talking a lot [during the exchange]."

Prior to arriving in Taipei, LGHS and SHS travelers spent three days in Taichung, located in the heart of central Taiwan. They began by exploring the historically rich Lukang Old Street and its various temples and shops. Students also visited the massive Changhua Great Buddha, which stands at nearly 80 feet tall, representing the feelings of peace and calm that Buddhism aims to promote. Later, the group

spent a whole day at one of Taiwan's designated national scenic areas, Sun Moon Lake. Students were able to ride in a glass cable car over the lake and surrounding mountains in order to view the landscape from all angles. The group ended their time in Taichung with a visit to Wufeng Lin Family Mansion and Garden, dessert from Miyahara Ice Cream Parlor, and sightseeing at the National Taichung Theater and Gaomei Wetlands.

In Taiwan's capital, Taipei, students had the opportunity to explore a wide range of tourist locations and serene temples. Taipei 101 — arguably Taiwan's most famous building — is home to a large mall full of shopping and food vendors. Among the country's most famous delicacies is boba, which has even made its way back to Los Gatos. Over the course of the trip, junior and boba tea connoisseur **Cassie Wei** took it upon herself to taste and review as much boba as possible. After trying nine versions of the beloved drink, she concluded that "the milk tea [in Taiwan] was pretty good and better than the US, but their fruit tea was worse." The students also enjoyed a meal at the historic Grand Hotel Taipei, one of the tallest traditionally designed buildings in East Asia. Upon their return on Apr. 12, the group of students flew back to America with a newfound sense of appreciation for Taiwanese culture and the Mandarin Chinese language.

(Sources: The Buddha Garden, TripAdvisor)



ARCHITECTURE: The Taipei 101 building stands tall.

Korean restaurant opens

by **Kayla Mitchell**
Media Production Editor

Last month marked the grand opening of the Danbi Korean Restaurant in downtown Los Gatos. The launching of the new restaurant will finally introduce popular Korean cuisine to the Los Gatos area. Owner Janet Soh has two other Danbi locations, both in the San Jose area, but has been hoping for an expansion into Los Gatos for over a year now. When she came across a fully furnished, kitchen-ready building — formerly home to Grocer + Goddess on Montebello Way — she quickly seized the opportunity to establish her newest location.

The Danbi menu at the Los Gatos location closely resembles the selections of the other sites, but the restaurant is slightly more upscale than its counterparts. The menu is packed with Korean street food favorites such as fried chicken (savory, spicy, and soy glazed), Kalbi (grilled beef short ribs), and Bi Bim Bap (mixed rice bowl). They also offer kimchi, vegetable, and seafood



YUMMY: Bi Bim Bap is a Korean dish served at Danbi.

pancakes. Ramen and soft tofu soups, as well as several types of fried rice, are also options at the location. Soh recommends the Japchae: a stir-fried dish of noodles with spinach, fragrant bulgogi beef, sweet onion, and crunchy cabbage or the hot clay pot sizzling rice: a version of Bi Bim Bap. Soh is proud of the latter meal, saying, "This is one of my favorite dishes. The rice cooks on the bottom and gets really crispy."

Soh, alongside best friend and location manager Sunny Choi, was determined to bring Korean cuisine and culture into Los Gatos with the opening of the new restaurant. Choi explained the involvement of many vegetable plates on the menu: "Korea has always been a poor country, and especially after the war there was very little refrigeration. We had to survive through harsh winters by preserving food." Choi's grandmother would bury a large ceramic pot in the ground into which she had submerged cabbage and other vegetables in a spicy brine. Choi recalls the winters saying, "I remember she would bring in icy, almost frozen, bowls of kimchi to have with our traditional meals." The restaurant is thoughtfully decorated with traditional Korean place mats, artwork, and other cultural accents, creating an authentic and inviting atmosphere that reflects the rich traditions of Korea.

Entrepreneur Soh came to the US from South Korea at age 18 and, after graduating from San Jose State, immediately became involved in the world of food. Her first franchise was a Baskin-Robbins location, followed by the purchase of two Togo's locations. Her investments led to her ownership of three Bonchon Korean Fried Chicken restaurant franchises, whose popularity inspired Soh to expand into Korean street food and open her first Danbi location. With the help of her close friend and business partner, Choi, Soh hopes to open a total of five Danbi locations.

Danbi is the Korean word for "sweet rain" which Choi interprets as "more like that wonderful first rain after a long drought." True to its name, the new Danbi Korean Restaurant brings a refreshing and much-needed addition to the culinary scene in Los Gatos.

(Source: Los Gatos, SiliconValley.com)



EXTERIOR: The restaurant is located in downtown LG.

Hands-Off Rally attracts protestors in San Jose

by **Kloe Adams**
Editorial Editor

Hundreds of thousands of people gathered across the country on Apr. 5 in mass-action protests organized by a pro-democracy movement known as Hands Off in response to what organizers called a "hostile takeover" and attack on American rights and freedoms. Nationwide, over 1,400 Hands Off protests took place at state capitols, federal buildings, Social Security's headquarters, parks, and city halls. The protests mostly concerned the current administration's decisions regarding immigrants, federal workers, transgender people, and a multitude of other groups. According to the Hands Off organizers, "This administration is targeting everybody who isn't part of the 1% - veterans, kids, seniors, farmers, immigrants, transgender people, and political opponents. All to consolidate power and reward their allies." Locally, there were Hands Off rallies in San Francisco, Oakland, Mountain View, Santa Cruz, and, closest to Los Gatos, San Jose. The San Jose rally began in Saint James Park with protestors marching past City Hall, returning to the park for a program of speakers.

The 50501 movement, Indivisible, and the Silicon Valley Immigration Committee (SVIC) organized the San Jose event. The 50501 website encouraged participants to "join us in the fight to uphold the Constitution and end executive overreach." Prominent speakers from



WALK: Protesters march and chant through the town of San Jose together.

the program included Uriel Magdalene from SVIC and John Duroyan from Freedom Road Socialist Organization (FRSO). Magdalene spoke out against United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) ongoing crackdowns and detentions of immigrants. Advocating for affected families, Magdalene insisted: "We demand no deportations and no separation of families!"

Duroyan, who also spoke during the program, urged citizens to fight back against the "billionaires and oligarchs gutting [the] country!" Crowds of protestors chanted such slogans as "Hey hey, ho ho, these billionaires have got to go!" and "When immigrants are under attack, what do we do? Stand up, fight back!" In addition to these slogans, protestors showed off handmade signs, including "Dump DOGE," "Resist Fascism," and "Hands Off Our Future."

Besides the San Jose rally, an estimated 5,000 people gathered outside the Tesla store at Broadway Plaza in Oakland, expressing anger as they marched down streets. April 5th's demonstrations are seen as a prelude to the upcoming National Day of Action Against Donald Trump planned for May 1.

Sources: (AP, CBS, CNN, SF Chronicle, Mercury News)

- Trump freezes Harvard grant money
- Texas teen fatally stabs a student

NATIONAL

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Democratic candidate wins Wisconsin Supreme Court race

By Sam Gruetter
Opinion Editor

The recent Wisconsin judicial election represented much more than the race for a new Wisconsin Supreme Court Judge. It showcased unprecedented election donations and highlighted the state's reactions to Donald Trump's recent Oval Office decisions. Susan Crawford, a former attorney for Planned Parenthood, represented the Democrats. Her opponent, Brad Schimel, represented the Republicans and received significant backing from President Trump and tech mogul Elon Musk. These backings represented a significant financial advantage for Schimel, as Musk is recorded to have donated 20 million dollars to his campaign, a large portion of the overall 90 million dollars spent on the election, earning it the name "A \$90m litmus test" from BBC News.

Crawford ultimately won the judicial election, effectively maintaining the 4-3 democratic majority the court currently has. According to CBS News, Crawford won 54 percent of the vote, whereas Schimel only won 45 percent. In response to her victory and Musk's overwhelming spending in the election, Crawford addressed crowds on Apr. 1, stating, "Wisconsin stood up and said loudly that justice does not have a price. Our courts are not for sale." Elizabeth Warren

echoed this sentiment in a tweet the same day, noting, "Wisconsin cannot be bought. Our democracy is not for sale. And when we fight, we win."

Musk supported the race full-force, backing Schimel with his personal and financial support. This support included an appearance



PROTEST: Crowds gather in Washington D.C. to garner support for Crawford.

Musk made in the state wearing a cheese hat, a commodity Wisconsin is famous for. He also offered voters checks worth one million dollars if they signed a petition that would stop judges who worked against the Trump agenda. Despite these efforts, Musk continues to face scrutiny from the public and maintains his unpopular reputation. Marquette Law School conducted a poll noting that Musk is viewed unfavorably by 53 percent of registered voters in Wisconsin. After the loss, Musk tweeted a surprising comment based on the amount of money and time he invested in the race: "I expected to lose, but there is value to losing a piece for a positional gain."

The election and the Democrats' success have much larger implications in the current political climate. This is true for several reasons, one being that the state's Supreme Court will play a large role in the congressional redistricting before the 2026 midterm elections for the House of Representatives 2028 presidential election. It is also significant as the Democratic success took place in tandem with the significant decrease in Republican support in the recent congressional election. While Republicans still won, the victory was narrower than expected, suggesting that Republican support is slowly waning as the Trump presidency continues. (Sources: BBC News, CBS News, NBC News, New York Post)

US citizens target Musk's position

By Annabelle Pan
Graphics Editor

In the past few months, there has been an increasing number of protests and illegal actions against Elon Musk — a businessman known for his leadership of Tesla, SpaceX, and X — and President Donald Trump. Trump hired Musk as a special government employee and promoted Tesla, Musk's car company, during an official appearance at the White House. Some US citizens claim Trump's actions indicate that wealthy special interests have an excessive amount of influence, and a few individuals even resorted to committing crimes to get their point across.

On Mar. 18 at 2:45 AM, a man dressed in all black with a face mask walked into a Tesla service center's parking lot in Las Vegas, threw Molotov cocktails at several vehicles, and fired multiple gunshots with a rifle. He then painted "RESIST" on the center's glass doors. Police worked around the clock to identify the culprit. They spotted him fleeing in a black Hyundai Elantra, identifying it as the car of Las Vegas resident Paul Kim. Kim claimed that he was drinking with a friend from midnight to 8 AM, but detectives found that his car was parked near the service center between 2:36 and 2:48 AM. Law enforcement searched his home and found multiple rifles, a shotgun, a handgun, and other gun parts. They arrested him on Mar. 27, and he will remain jailed until his trial on charges of arson and possessing an explosive device.

There has been an increase in attacks on Tesla property across the country, particularly in



CIVIL UPSET: Mobs in Boston hold a flag of Musk and Trump.

left-leaning areas in the Pacific Northwest. In Salem, Oregon, an man threw several Molotov cocktails at a Tesla store and then returned the day after to shoot out the windows. In Tigard, Oregon, someone fired more than a dozen times at a Tesla showroom, damaging vehicles and windows but not people. A 70-year-old man in Idaho was arrested for driving his vehicle into a pickup truck with pro-Trump flags during a protest at a Tesla dealership. The crash injured the man inside the pickup, but he has since been treated and released from the hospital. Additionally, a woman in Colorado attacked Tesla dealerships and spray-painted the words "Nazi cars" on a building.

Other frustrated citizens took action by protesting. Over 1,400 "Hands Off!" mass-action protests have been held at state capitols, federal buildings, congressional offices, city halls, and parks. More than 600,000 people signed up for these events, some of which happened in major cities outside of the country. Organizers of these protests have three main demands: "an end to the billionaire takeover and rampant corruption of the Trump administration; an end to slashing federal funds for Medicaid, Social Security, and other programs working people rely on; and an end to the attacks on immigrants, trans people, and other communities." These protesters plan to continue until their demands are met. (Sources: AP, CNN, NBC)



INFLUENCE: Musk speaks at a political conference in Maryland.

High schooler stabs teenage boy

By Katie Borders
National/World Editor

On Apr. 2, 17-year-old Austin Metcalf attended a track and field championship in Frisco, Texas, where he was fatally stabbed in the heart. At approximately 10 AM, under the Memorial High School tent in the stadium bleachers, an altercation began between Metcalf and 17-year-old Karmelo Anthony, a student from Centennial High School. Witnesses reported that Metcalf told Anthony to leave his team's tent and sit with his own team, to which Anthony allegedly reached into his bag and said, "Touch me and see what happens." When Metcalf attempted to grab Anthony to tell him to move, Anthony pulled out a knife and stabbed Metcalf once in the chest before fleeing the scene. Metcalf's identical twin brother, Hunter Metcalf, turned just in time to see his brother clutching his bleeding chest and



IN MEMORY: Austin Metcalf poses in his school football jersey.



CRISIS: Memorial High School's parking lot sits next to the track.

rushed immediately to attempt to stop the bleeding as his brother died in his arms. Hunter Metcalf recounted the horrifying experience, describing, "I put my hand on there [his chest], tried to make [the bleeding] stop, and I grabbed his head and I looked in his eyes. I just saw his soul leave. And it took my soul, too."

The suspect, Anthony, was quickly apprehended by police at the stadium, during which he admitted to the stabbing but insisted that he acted in self-defense. Currently, Anthony is charged with first-degree murder and is being held in the Collin

County Jail on a one million dollar bond until his trial. District Attorney Greg Willis delivered a statement to KTVT about how Anthony's case could go to trial by the end of June 2025.

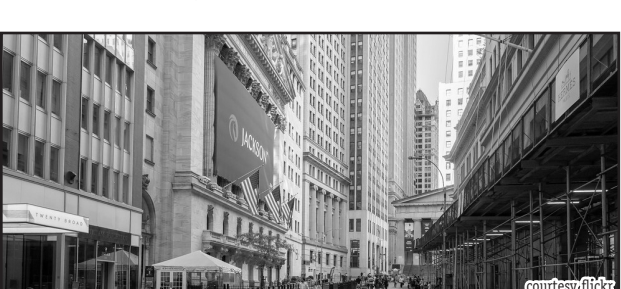
During a heart-wrenching interview on Working for All Alike (WFAA), Hunter Metcalf recalled, "It really was under 30 seconds, this altercation." Both family and friends grieve the loss of Austin Metcalf, who was remembered as a kind-hearted young man with a bright future ahead of him that was taken away from him in a matter of seconds. His brother described the stabbing as "senseless" and Metcalf's memory lives on in his classmates, teammates, and coaches. His mother, Meghan Metcalf, emotionally stated, "If I could say anything to the nation, I would say to make sure that you just hug your babies tight, because you don't know when the last time you'll get to do it." Metcalf's father, who attended the track meet, said in an interview with Fox News, "My son is gone and he will never come home again."

Amid the Frisco community reeling from the shocking and tragic loss of Metcalf, they hope for the coming trial that justice will prevail. (Sources: CNN, Dallas News, NCAA)

US stock market crashes amid tariff battles and trade regulations

By Kloe Adams and Sam Gruetter
Editorial and Opinion Editors

On Apr. 4, the stock market dropped a staggering 2,231 points. The Standard & Poor's 500 (S&P 500), an indicator that measures the overall performance of the US stock market and, by extension, the US economy, recorded that it shed 5.06 trillion dollars in market value since the initial plunge. This drop was not out of the blue, however,



FINANCIAL CAPITAL: Commuters stroll through Wall Street in New York.

As the recent "Liberation Day" tariffs President Donald Trump and his administration have been implementing have inspired an overwhelming wave of retaliatory tariffs from countries such as Vietnam. The drop signals a concerning trend in the American economy and leaves many experts predicting that there is no positive end in sight.

In a single day, the Dow, S&P 500, and Nasdaq all recorded a 5-6 percent drop in stocks, a significant decrease considering the short time frame. All of the entities above track different aspects of the stock market and, combined, produce a picture of its general health and productivity. The Dow tracks 30 large companies, allowing it to produce an accurate snapshot of the health of the economy. Currently, the Dow is in a correction, meaning there has been a drop between ten and 19 percent in stocks. Similarly, the S&P 500 also entered a correction, tracking 500 companies. Finally, the Nasdaq, which focuses on the tech industry and similar markets, reported the most concerning state, officially entering what experts refer to as a "bear market." A bear market is when a stock falls 20 percent from its most recent high and is significantly more serious than a correction.

Wall Street's fear gauge, the Cboe Volatility Index, surged 50 percent. Extreme fear drove markets, according to CNN's Fear and Greed index. Guided by fear, traders ditch risky stocks, especially tech companies whose overseas products are likely subject to large tariffs. Apple fell nine percent on Apr. 3, followed by another 7.3 percent on Apr. 4. As investors sell stocks, they are pouring money into traditional safe havens, including government bonds. The ten-year treasury yield represents the annual interest rate the US government pays to borrow money for ten years, and, for the first time since October, fell below four percent. In addition, commodities such as gold and oil face surges, with gold reaching 3,130 dollars a troy ounce on Apr. 4, setting a new record, before settling at 3,030 dollars.

In retaliation, trading partner China announced on Apr. 4 the imposition of a 34 percent tariff on imports of all US products beginning Apr. 10. Moreover, the Chinese Commerce Ministry also said it would implement tighter restrictions on exports of raw materials used in products such as computer chips and electric vehicle batteries. Analysts with Capital Economics commented on said restrictions: "This is an aggressive, escalatory response that makes a near-term deal to end the trade war between the two superpowers highly unlikely." (Sources: CBS, CCN)



SPEAKER: President Trump delivers a speech to audiences at a conference.

Waltz leaks US military plans in Signal group chat

by Margo Rawlings
Editor-in-Chief

Last month, Mike Waltz, the US National Security Advisor, inadvertently added a journalist from The Atlantic to a group chat on the messaging platform Signal, where top US officials openly discussed attack plans for an operation the US military carried out in Yemen.

The White House concluded an internal review into the incident, but Congress, along with other American groups, is demanding further investigation.



LISTEN: Journalist Jeffrey Goldberg participates in a Q&A session.

Members of the Armed Services Committee have expressed their intent to continue the investigation by asking the Department of Defense (DOD) inspector general to open a new investigation. Republican Senator Mike Rounds of South Dakota noted that although the White House announced the conclusion of the review,

“We’ll wait and see how the inspector general for the DOD says. [The investigation is] already ongoing. We already requested it — the committee did on a bipartisan basis — and we’ll look at it on a bipartisan basis.” Additionally, Republican Senator Todd Young of Indiana mentioned that he has continued questioning regarding the matter. He said, “All concerns haven’t been addressed. So there will be more to be learned going forward.”

An inspector general, who is a government official independent from the executive administration and not a part of the cabinet, would conduct this investigation. The acting Inspector General, Steven Stebbins, shared that “the objective of this evaluation is to determine the extent to which the Secretary of Defense and other [Department of Defense] personnel complied with DOD policies and procedures for the use of a commercial messaging application for official business.” Many congressmen and other government officials are concerned that similar conversations took place on unsecured platforms, with the Washington Post reporting that Waltz used Gmail for other conversations. Senator Mark Warner, a Democrat on the Senate Intelligence Committee, explained that the Signal GroupChat investigation is “far from a closed case,” and by ending the investigation, “It means we’ll never know how many more screw ups there were. It means that we don’t know if the phones have even been swept for malware. It means we don’t know how many other conversations went on. And frankly if my Republican colleagues can’t find their voices on this, it doesn’t bode well for national security.”

Many legal experts have speculated that adding The Atlantic reporter to the Signal group chat may have violated the Espionage Act and caused further trouble due to the chat’s disappearing messages.

This prompted the American Oversight group to file a lawsuit claiming Pete Hegseth and John Redcliffe violated the Federal Records Act and the Administrative Procedure Act.

Although the White House has concluded its formal review of the incident, the investigation is certainly far from over because of new legal action and bipartisan calls to continue questioning. (Sources: NBC, The Atlantic, The Guardian, The Hill)



FLASH: US National Security Advisor Mike Waltz speaks to reporters.

All female crew goes to space

by Julia Valencia
People Editor

On April 14, six women — pop star Katy Perry, aerospace engineer Aisha Bowe, feminist activist Amanda Nguyen, journalist Gayle King, film producer Kerianne Flynn, and philanthropist and fiancée of Jeff Bezos, Lauren Sánchez — comprised the first all-female space crew to leave the atmosphere in the 21st century. The trip lasted ten minutes and 21 seconds, allowing the women to experience around four minutes of being weightless.



IMPOSING VIEW: New Shepard spacecraft stands tall.

Blue Origin, owned by Jeff Bezos, is a fairly novice space program. Though it was founded in 2000, the company did not send a rocket with a crew until 2021. Since then, they have made 11 trips to space, 58 people total, and market themselves as a commercial space tourism group. The rocket, New Shepard, launched from West Texas at 8:30 AM (6:30

AM PST), and landed in the Texas desert with the aid of three parachutes. The New Shepard launched the women more than 62 miles above Earth, placing them outside of its atmosphere. Therefore, they were officially recognized as outside the internationally agreed-upon boundary of space. The New Shepard spacecraft required no pilots, and the crew did not have to do anything to operate the ship.

The last time an all-female space crew took to the stars was in 1963 when the Soviet Union’s Valentina Tereshkova became the first woman to go to space. She had a three-day solo trip and orbited Earth 48 times before returning home as an international celebrity and a feminist hero.

Though Blue Origin advertised the trip as a way to encourage women to pursue STEM, in reality, it was more of a recreational activity and publicity stunt. Amanda Hess, a NY Times journalist, said, “If the flight proves anything, it is that women are now free to enjoy capitalism’s most decadent spoils alongside the world’s wealthiest men.”

During a press conference, Bowe revealed that her high school guidance counselor advised her to pursue cosmetology because she “did not think that I would be suited for this field. I went from pre-algebra and community college to do two degrees in aerospace engineering, to working for NASA.” Bowe said that the trip was “bigger than the criticism” that was being posed, and that it was an important step for all women.

Dr. Kai-Uwe Schrogl, special advisor for political affairs at the European Space Agency, acted as a voice for many who see the tourist flights as unnecessary. He said that while they are “significant and exciting,” they also are an area that provides immense frustration to space scientists. These people are not astronauts, and yet they tend to get significantly more attention for their minuscule atmospheric trips than real astronauts, who dedicate their lives to space exploration. (Sources: BBC, CNN, NY Times)

Hudson helicopter crashes

by Britt Melinauskas
Sports Editor

On Apr. 10, a New York City helicopter meant for tours and sightseeing broke apart midair and crashed into the Hudson River, killing six individuals. The victims included a Spanish family of five and the pilot: Agustin Escobar, his wife, Mercè Campubi Montal, and their children Victor, Mercedes, and Agustin. The helicopter pilot was Seankese Johnson, a United States Navy veteran who logged over 800 hours of air flight time and earned his commercial pilot’s license in 2023.



SEARCH: The Coast Guard searches water for survivors.

During the tour, surrounding witnesses viewed the helicopter glide with a trail of smoke with the primary rotor breaking away from the remainder of the aircraft. The helicopter took off from the runway at 3:00 PM. Less than 18 minutes into the tour, it rapidly descended into the water near the southern tip of Manhat-

tan after completing a loop around the Statue of Liberty and flying past several landmarks along the Manhattan skyline.

Current aviation lawyer and past Marine Corps pilot Justin Green explained how the central rotors collided with the stabilizers, initiating a descent into the Hudson River. Green stated, “They were dead as soon as whatever happened happened,” and he believes that “there’s no indication they had any control over the craft. No pilot could have prevented that accident once they lost the lifts. It’s like a rock falling to the ground. It’s heartbreaking.”

Emergency rescue vehicles rushed to the sunken vehicle within minutes. They were able to retrieve the helicopter with a floating crane after 8:00 PM., but, the pilot and all passengers were killed upon impact. The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) explained how divers continued to recover debris from the wreckage of the aircraft. Reports indicated that several components were heavily damaged, complicating the analysis. After further investigation, NTSB found that the helicopter contained no onboard video or flight records to assist in finalizing the causes of the helicopter catastrophe. Investigators are now relying on physical evidence and eyewitness accounts to piece together the final moments of the flight.

Within the past eight years, the New York Helicopter Tours company has continually faced bankruptcy and lawsuits over debt. In past lawsuits, one of the company’s helicopters lost electricity while airborne in 2013, representing the company’s multiple machinery-related issues. The crashed helicopter was built in 2004, according to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), and last September, a fault in the helicopter’s transmission assembly required maintenance. Following the air crash, New York Helicopter Tours shut down operations immediately, and the FAA revealed a final review of licenses and safety records for the agency’s closure. (Sources: AP, CNN, NBC)

Trump administration freezes Harvard’s federal funding

by Dylan Wadhwa
Opinion Editor

The Trump administration announced Monday, Apr. 14 that it would freeze approximately 2.2 billion dollars in federal grants and a 60 million dollar contract with Harvard University, following the institution’s refusal to comply with controversial new federal requirements. The decision has emboldened tensions between the federal government and one of America’s top universities, marking a large confrontation over university rights and academic freedom.



STAND TALL: Students walk around Harvard University’s large campus.

Harvard’s resistance came in response to demands issued by the Trump administration, which required the university to put out many oversight measures regarding staff hiring policies, student misconduct, and many other Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives. The administration argued these steps were necessary to counter different university biases, particularly school antisemitism, within higher education institutions across the country.

Additionally, among the federal government’s demands were orders that Harvard needs to report international students who violate campus rules directly to federal authorities, which would subject academic departments to much more outside supervision to ensure political and “viewpoint diversity.” This would effectively eliminate all school diversity, equity, and inclusion programs. The administration did not clearly define the scope of “viewpoint diversity,” but it mentioned an interest in including conservative perspectives within the Harvard staff decision-making process.

Harvard’s stance has garnered much support from within the academic community. Staff groups and education advocates have applauded the university’s stance, which suggests that Harvard’s actions could inspire other institutions facing similar pressures to assert their independence and resist what many view as a clear infringement upon their university rights. Criticism has also emerged from political leaders aligned with the Trump administration’s stance, including Representa-

tive Elise Stefanik, who called for an end to taxpayer funding of Harvard due to its refusal to comply with federal directives.



BIG SIGNATURE: President Trump signs orders at the White House.

Furthermore, a group of Harvard faculty members has already started initiating legal action against the Trump administration, challenging the legality of both the imposed requirements and the federal funding freeze. This legal action represents a clear effort to uphold academic freedom and prevent government interference in university governance.

As nationwide universities closely monitor the outcome of this battle, the results of Harvard’s resistance against Trump may shape the future relationship between colleges and the federal government. (Sources: CNN, NY Times, Washington Post)

- S. Korea president gets impeached
- Nguema becomes Gabon's president

WORLD

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South Korean court impeaches President Yoon Suk Yeol

by **Chloe Wilson**
Humor Editor

South Korea removed its president, Yoon Suk Yeol, from office, after previously declaring martial law this past December. His removal ended months of uncertainty for citizens. The court's decision on Apr. 4 makes the formal removal of the president after he was impeached late last year. This order is effective immediately, meaning that he will leave the presidential residence and a new election will now take place.

On Apr. 14, Yoon appeared in the Seoul court for the beginning of a criminal trial pertaining to his declaration of martial law. Lawyer Min Kyoung-sic is charging him with insurrection, punishable by the death penalty or life in prison, though South Korea has not used the death penalty in decades.

The president's declaration of martial law was short-lived, as parliamentarians quickly voted to overturn it after six hours. Additionally, the parliamentarians stopped the special operations soldiers, who were breaking windows and arriving by helicopter to Parliament, from entering the building. Yoon defended himself regarding this declaration and explained that "martial law is not a coup d'etat" and added that it

was a "peaceful message." Many supporters of the impeached president protested in Seoul, opposing his removal from office. Yoon himself argued, "To frame an event that lasted only a few hours was non-violent, and immediately accepted the dissolution request from the National Assembly as insurrection...strikes me as legally unfounded."

The trial prosecutors claimed Yoon paralyzed state institutions and declared martial law for personal benefit. The former president was the chief prosecutor of South Korea before his presidency and rejected all allegations during the trial. This trial is expected to be extensive. Yoon apologized to the citizens, pleading, "I am so sorry and regretful that I wasn't able to live up to your expectations." Kyoung-sic told news agencies, "The first verdict is likely to be delivered around August, but the case involves around 70,000 pages of evidence and numerous witnesses. So if deemed necessary by the court, the trial may be extended."

According to South Korea law, following the removal of a president, an election must take place within 60 days. The country will hold an election on Jun. 3 to follow this law. This election is necessary to preserve the stability of South Korea's economy, the fourth-largest in Asia, especially during an economic crisis and a long-lasting global trade war. Yoon now holds the place of the second president to be ousted by the Constitutional Court. He is also now the shortest-serving elected leader in the democratic history of the nation. (Sources: CNN, DW, Reuters)

conomic crisis and a long-lasting global trade war. Yoon now holds the place of the second president to be ousted by the Constitutional Court. He is also now the shortest-serving elected leader in the democratic history of the nation. (Sources: CNN, DW, Reuters)



PROTEST: South Korean citizens urge the removal of the president.

Winds seriously damage China

by **Julia Valencia**
People Editor

As climate change remains a persistent and growing problem, weird weather phenomena are becoming increasingly common around the world, most recently in China.

In Beijing, winds reaching 101 miles per hour followed a series of hot 80-degree Fahrenheit days, which led the Chinese weather service to issue their first orange alert for winds in years. These winds surpassed the long-held 1951 April wind speed record in China. The winds stem from a cold vortex system that exists over Mongolia, and though wind storms are common around this time of year in China, climate change is amplifying the extreme weather. China measures wind on a scale between one and 17, where 11 can "cause serious damage" and 12 can bring "extreme destruction."

The winds across Northern China between Apr. 11-13 reached level 13 wind conditions. Chinese government officials advised Beijing's 22 million citizens to stay inside on Apr. 12 due to

the extreme danger weather conditions. The winds were so strong that they toppled metal structures, uprooted more than 800 trees, and caused dust storms across northern China. The winds also put a pause to transport across the city, with hundreds of flights cancelled, along with train and bus public transportation being postponed. China urged citizens who weighed less than 110 pounds to stay inside for fear that herculean winds could potentially blow them away. The Beijing Meteorological Service said, "This strong wind is extreme, lasts for a long time, affects a wide area, and is highly disastrous."

Many tourist attractions closed in response to the windstorm, including the Summer Palace, the Forbidden City, and popular parts of the Great Wall of China. Though northern China was the main area affected by the weather, the western coasts of Japan and South Korea were also issued strong winds warnings as a precaution.

As it is the world's number one emitter of greenhouse gases, China has been at the forefront of climate change since the start of 1950s. Its average monthly temperature is increasing at a notably faster rate than the rest of the world.

China's extensive industrial expansion, along with its large population, has added to its over-reliance on fossil fuels, leading to excessively high emissions of greenhouse gases.

The recent windstorm in Beijing highlights just one of the real-life examples of the growing impact of climate change on global weather patterns. While strong winds are typical for this time of year in the region, their intensity and sheer scale were unusual, even breaking long-standing records and causing widespread disruption. As climate change continues to influence atmospheric conditions, such extreme weather events are becoming more common. (Sources: BBC, NY Times, The Guardian)



SAFETY: Heavy dust storms in China envelop whole cities.

Sandstorm greatly affects Iraq

by **Jordan Park**
Sports Editor

Recently, a powerful sandstorm struck central and southern Iraq, casting an unusual orange hue over the sky. In some areas, visibility has dropped to under half a mile, and thousands are seeking treatment in emergency rooms for respiratory issues.

Amir al-Jabri, the spokesman for Iraq's meteorology department, explained that the "heavy waves of dust" swept across the country after starting in eastern Saudi Arabia, a predominantly desert region, and collected extra particles as they moved through southwestern Iraq, which shares a similarly dry landscape. While sandstorms have traditionally been a part of Iraq's winter and early spring climate, experts indicate that these storms are now occurring more frequently and with greater intensity. This increase can be attributed mainly to prolonged and more frequent droughts affecting Iraq and its neighboring country, Syria, along with the process of desertification, in which fertile land gradually deteriorates into desert due to climate change and unsustainable land management. As desertification expands, larger areas of once-productive land are transformed into barren landscapes, worsening the conditions that lead to severe sandstorms. The recent storm was the most severe in Iraq in 2025, but a similarly intense storm impacted Baghdad in December, and there were multiple significant sandstorms in 2022.

Although the storm subsided on Apr. 15, and temperatures dropped slightly, southern Iraq faced daily highs exceeding 100 degrees before the sandstorm blocked the sun and cooled the air. During the latest storm, many individuals, particularly police officers and emergency workers who were outdoors, wore face masks for protection, while others covered their mouths with cloth.

The sand and dust were so widespread that they infiltrated nearly every home and vehicle, seeping through the tiniest cracks to cover all surfaces. This made it challenging to use computers and compelled almost everyone except emergency workers to remain indoors.

Iraq's health ministry spokesman, Saif al-Badr, reported that emergency rooms in the south received 3,747 cases of Iraqis experiencing respiratory issues due to the storm. Over 1,000 cases were recorded in Basra, where the storm was particularly severe on Apr. 14, and 451 cases were noted in Najaf, a smaller city. Residents of Muthanna Province, which shares a lengthy border with Saudi Arabia, were also significantly affected. Al-Badr added that most of the thousands treated for respiratory problems had since been released. Videos and photos shared online displayed areas enveloped in a dense orange haze, while local media reported power outages and flight cancellations in several regions. (Sources: BBC, NY Times)



TAKE COVER: Powerful sandstorms strike southern Iraq.

General Brice Oligui Nguema becomes Gabon's president

by **Quinn Hathaway**
National/World Editor

General Brice Oligui Nguema won the election in Gabon in the aftermath of his 2023 coup of the prior government. Gabon gained independence from France in 1960, and 1967 brought the Bongo Dynasty to power with Omar Bongo's election. Bongo ruled from 1967 until he died in 2009, passing the position down to his son Ali Bongo Ondimba. Ondimba ruled until 2023, when military leader Gen. Nguema overthrew the dynasty.

Following an unsuccessful movement in 2019, Nguema held a successful coup in 2023, supported by accusations of fraud and conspiracy surrounding the elections. Ondimba was seeking re-election for what would be his third term of presidency, and polling issues sparked a revolt. The country installed Nguema as interim president, and he was officially elected this year.

Nguema won by a large margin, receiving 90.87 percent of the votes. Interior Prime Minister Hermann Immongault described the results, saying, "Brice Clotaire Oligui Nguema is elected [president] by absolute majority of votes cast, with 575,222 votes." A majority cast their ballots in

this election, with the turnout approximating 87 percent voting across over 3,000 voting stations. However, many citizens and politicians across Gabon are speaking out about potentially corrupt voting.



SALUTE: General Nguema meets a fellow statesman.

Nguema's main opponent in the campaign race was Bilie-by-Nze, a former Gabonian Prime Minister. Nze expressed his concerns in a video, discussing how blank voting ballots could be falsified, and

understaffed voting locations could result in box stuffing. However, Nze eventually conceded his loss on Apr. 14, as he only received approximately three percent of the total votes.

Nze's concession did not stop the electoral controversy, with one citizen who reportedly voted for Nze saying, "If he won, it's because he used state equipment, helicopters, cars, even the military." Nze himself continues to comment on the inequities, saying, "Fairness was undermined by the imbalance of resources — with one candidate campaigning at the taxpayers' expense while others had to rely on their personal means." Amid the disputes over the election results, the newly revised presidential code stands out as a means for Nguema to consolidate even more power politically. The constitutional changes include entirely removing the role of prime minister, as well as limiting the electoral pool by eliminating any candidates over the age of 70.

Politically, Gabon is currently in a state of corruption due to the civilian inequalities. Gabon is one of the richest countries by GDP, with large natural supplies of oil and timber. However, the amount of poverty is still significant, with 35 percent of the population receiving an income

of under two dollars a day. The country under Nguema's regime is supposedly set to improve financially, with Nguema promising, "I am a captain who knows how to bring a ship to a safe port. You will see how the country is going to take off." (Sources: BBC, CNN, NYT)



MEETING: Government officials meet to discuss Gabon.

EDITORIAL

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- El Gato encourages LGHS to acknowledge the maintenance staff

LGHS students must respect the maintenance staff

by Sam Gruetter, Megan Saul, and Lucy Panicacci

Opinion Editor, Culture Editor, and Editor-in-Chief

The maintenance and custodial staff at Los Gatos High School work every day to ensure that our campus is not only clean, but beautiful. With a day shift from 6:00 AM to 3:00 PM and a night shift from 3:00 PM to 11:00 PM, custodians and maintenance workers keep the campus bathrooms, classrooms, and cafeteria in top shape with detailed cleaning and necessary repairs. As a result of their dedication, LGHS students do not need to worry about messes or deterioration of the school. However, because maintenance staff try not to interfere with the routine of students by working early mornings and late nights, many students do not see the process behind the continual, daily upkeep. Unbeknownst to most Wildcats, the busiest time of the year for the LG maintenance staff occurs during the summer. After graduation, custodians deep clean the whole campus, emptying out the classrooms and stripping and waxing the floors. Additionally, maintenance makes sure everything works properly, including the bleachers, basketball hoops, filters, electrical system, roofing, dance studios, and air conditioning. Recognizing the abundance of work that LG maintenance and custodial staff complete, we need to treat our campus, and those who keep it functioning, with respect. Through their impact on student life, it is important that students know and acknowledge the hard-working people who keep our campus in pristine condition.

Rosalia Guzman has worked at Los Gatos High School for the last 18 years. Working the day shift, Guzman starts her schedule by checking on the bathrooms: stocking them, making sure everything functions properly, and dealing with weekly graffiti on the stalls. Her main task is maintaining the school cafeteria, creating a clean environment for students to sit down and eat their food during break and lunch. Guzman enjoys the feeling of dining in a tidy, organized restaurant and wants to carry that same standard to our cafeteria: "If I would like to have [my restaurant experience] like that, I have to give it like that." Outside of work, Guzman

likes to relax at home and go biking; in fact, she won second place for her age group in a 10K race last year. She also enjoys traveling and visits her parents in Mexico twice a year.

Ruben Dearo has been a crucial part of the maintenance staff for the past four years. In his role, Dearo helps to maintain the safety of the school by repairing facilities and preserving the high quality of the campus. Some days, his tasks consist of fixing light structures and sports equipment. While most of his interactions with students are generally positive, occasionally vandalism occurs on campus. He explained, "Vandalism happens usually at the beginning of the year, and then calms down. Then, at the end, when testing goes on, students are stressed out. I think that's how they take it out." Such destructive student behavior adds to the jobs of Dearo and the rest of the maintenance and

custodial staff. Despite the countless hours Dearo dedicates to making LGHS a better place, he still finds time in his daily life to spend with his family, going camping, but more preferably glamping, in the woods. At home, he grows a garden and fruit trees in his yard.

Although it is only his third year at LGHS, Lubomir Drapal has already made a large impact on the school. He also works on the maintenance team and can always be found at school, whether at the maintenance yard or completing a task around campus. Even though the majority of the time, the maintenance staff is working away from students, many students' actions have also positively influenced their work. Drapal shared, "If there is a problem, the best way to approach it is to talk to leadership." At home, Drapal is surrounded by animals, including his chickens, cat, dog, and two

beehives. For the past 25 years, he has owned and cared for bees, despite being a part of the small percentage of people who are allergic to bee stings.

Daniel Herrera is another instrumental employee on the LGHS custodial team. Herrera has been working at the school for 13 years, starting as a maintenance worker and then working his way up to Plant Supervisor. This title includes a wide variety of responsibilities, such as overseeing employees and organizing the repairs for different areas of campus, many of which he performs behind the scenes, both after hours and during the summer. Similar to the rest of his employees, Herrera arrives at the school around 6:00 AM, when many students are still asleep. This provides him with two hours to make sure the school is clean and that anything broken has been fixed upon students' arrival. Despite dealing with several instances of campus destruction and vandalism, Herrera still radiates appreciation for the school's community and open campus, commenting, "I love it here." He also noted the unique position Los Gatos is in, as we are one of the few schools in the area that has a maintenance team on site. While many other schools have to submit a work order and have teachers deal with vandalism, a simple radio call will solve any maintenance issues at Los Gatos, which is a privilege many students are unaware of. Although he works long hours at LGHS, Herrera has several hobbies outside of school, including traveling and spending time with his family. Having traveled to New York and Mexico, Herrera also wants to visit Hawaii, Guadalajara, and Ensenada.

Whether it is beekeeping, glamping, biking, or traveling, the LGHS custodial staff's lives expand far beyond the confines of this school. From learning about their hobbies to appreciating the work they do around campus, students should treat the staff with respect and kindness by taking care of the campus. One program Herrera cited as helping alleviate vandalism is posters in bathrooms that discourage acts of defacement. He emphasized that when the condemnation of vandalism comes from the students themselves, it is much more effective. Furthermore, students should acknowledge the hard work the custodial staff puts in and the privileges they enjoy by respecting the campus LGHS is lucky to have.



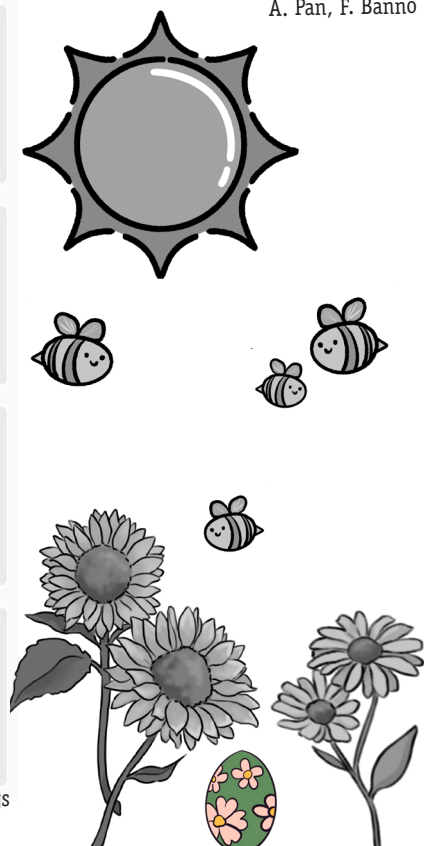
F. Banno



A. Pan, F. Banno

DEFENSE	BEAM	JOB	ENERGY
INTERIOR	GREEN	COLUMN	WALL
RADIO	FLOOR	PEARL	WASHINGTON
INSTAGRAM	STATE	SIGN	SOUND

connections R. Zeman, M. Hastings



Answers: (Building Structures) - Column, Beam, Wall, Floor (Government Departments) - Interior, Energy, State, Defense (First Word to 90's Band) - Pearl, Sound, Radio, Green (Post) - Washington, Instagram, Job, Sign

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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.

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- Saul encourages weight training
- Stop wearing Air Pods at school

Strahs encourages students to stay home when sick

by Hayley Strahs
News Editor



Getting sick is never fun. Along with feeling generally unwell, the notion of making up classwork and missing after-school activities often makes absences seem dreadful. In order to avoid a homework pile-up, many students will show up to school while sick. At first glance, toughing it out through an illness might seem inconsequential or even beneficial: after all, enduring one day of school sick is usually easier than spending three days making up assignments. Unfortunately, your sick classmate across the room has just become Patient Zero, and you could be next. If the COVID-19 pandemic taught us anything, it's that viruses travel like wildfire in the absence of protective masks, which students rarely wear post-pandemic. As if spreading infections for one's own benefit isn't unethical enough, my classmates often remain purposely ignorant of their condition by refusing to take a COVID test or measure their temperature — both of which I've clearly overheard kids talking about in class. If at all avoidable, students must stop coming to class while sick, or at the very least, start taking proper precautions when they do.

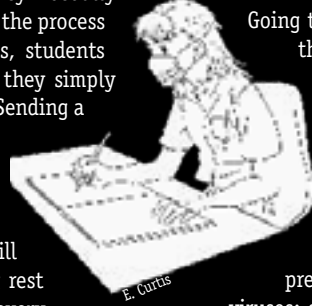
The main reason students, including myself, lament missing class is the volume of makeup work upon returning. Even one day gone can amount to multiple hours spent at the library or testing center completing past assignments, while still continuing to stay on top of current work. Fortunately, all LGHS teachers have a late and absent work policy—usually outlined in a syllabus—that streamlines the process of completing missed work. Oftentimes, students dread making up assignments because they simply don't communicate with their teachers. Sending a quick email from your bed is objectively easier than withstanding six or more hours of active listening and participation, even if you must go out of your way to do so. Tests and assignments will still be there upon your return; getting rest is time-sensitive and often vital for recovery.

If you don't want to stay home for your health, stay home for the sake of your classmates' well-being. Even though going to school might save you a few hours of makeup work, spreading your illness to other students can impact their lives for days. With common infections like the flu, strep throat, and most stomach viruses, the severity of symptoms

vary drastically. For instance, if one infected student has a runny nose and a fever for two days, another might have a more intense week of non-stop headaches and nausea. Everyone has their own academic and extracurricular obligations, and attending school for your own activities can force someone else out of theirs. Whether it's a track meet or a bio quiz, no one wants to miss their big day. Going to school at the risk of getting others sick is a declaration that your own plans should take priority over someone else's.

Unfortunately, staying home isn't a viable option for everyone. Pressure from parents and risk of truancy often make absence troublesome, forcing kids into school whether they like it or not. Luckily, these circumstances are not the end-all-be-all, and sick students can easily take preventative measures to avoid spreading their infections to others. Wearing a medical grade—not cloth, preferably N-95—mask limits the transmission of airborne viruses; similarly, utilizing hand sanitizer and not sharing school supplies does the same for contact-based illnesses.

When possible, staying home from school when sick is the best option for all parties involved. The next time you're on the fence about an illness-related absence, play it safe, either from the comfort of your bedroom with a movie on, or the corner of the classroom with a mask on.



Educate yourself on Crypto

by Dylan Wadhwa
Opinion Editor



Once hailed as the future of all finance, people continually see cryptocurrency as a currency built on misinformation and dangerous lack of regulation. What began as an experiment

in decentralizing the economy has escalated to a one trillion-dollar ecosystem riddled with fraud, market manipulation, and financial ruin for everyday investors. The appeal of crypto is simple: it is a decentralized virtual currency that allows for secure, contact-free, and instantaneous money transfers throughout the globe. Financial influencers and celebrities need to be held accountable for the harm caused by promoting worthless or deceptive projects.

Crypto is not backed by anything. Most stable currencies, such as the US dollar, are backed by government debt or other factors to guarantee the currency's long-term value and stability. Cryptocurrencies, on the other hand, have no intrinsic value, no physical backing, and no central authority to intervene when things go wrong. The people simply decide how much they are willing to pay for one unit of cryptocurrency.

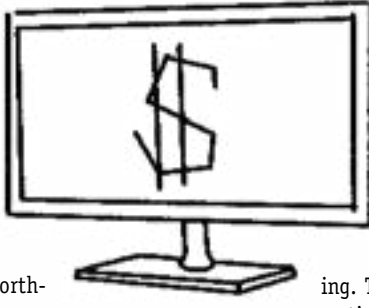
Since the price of crypto is purely determined by speculation, this creates an ecosystem ripe for manipulation and fraud. One of the most infamous examples is Bitconnect, which posed as a legitimate investment platform but turned out to be

a massive Ponzi scheme. Investors were promised guaranteed returns of one percent per day, only to see the entire platform collapse in 2018, wiping out billions of dollars in value.

This makes crypto a breeding ground for scams, from pump-and-dump schemes to outright theft through hacked exchanges or "rug pulls," where developers abandon a project and vanish with investors' money. For everyday investors, crypto can become a nightmare. Lured in by various social media posts advertising the "boom" of cryptocurrency, people will buy into one and raise the price. Once the price has reached a pinnacle, developers sell, go home with their profits, and let the crypto tank in price.

Furthermore, the environmental costs of cryptocurrency are significant and much more wide-ranging. The process of mining crypto, particularly with currencies like Bitcoin, requires large amounts of computational power and, as a result, vast amounts of electricity. Entire networks of high-powered machines run all the time, consuming more energy yearly than some small countries. This energy use contributes significantly to carbon emissions around the globe, which in turn slowly degrades the ecosystems of our planet.

Cryptocurrency was supposed to decentralize finance. However, now it's more comparable to a digitized casino where the house never loses. If regulators do not step in with serious oversight to protect consumers from overpaying for crypto, people should not invest in cryptocurrency.



Limit campaign donations

by Margo Rawlings
Editor-in-Chief



Recently, Democrat Susan Crawford beat Republican-backed Brad Schimel for an open seat on Wisconsin's Supreme Court. Elon Musk spent nearly 20 million dollars funding Schimel's campaign. This election drew much attention from both Republicans and Democrats because politicians expect Wisconsin's Supreme Court to play an important role in cases regarding congressional redistricting prior to the 2026 midterm elections. Musk even traveled to Wisconsin to help campaign for Schimel, offering two one-million-dollar checks to attendees of his town hall meeting in Green Bay. These kinds of donations give corporations and special interest groups disproportionate influence over campaigns, influence that overpowers the voices of regular citizens and undermines ideals of fair representation.

The Supreme Court's ruling in the landmark case Citizens United v. The Federal Election Committee (FEC) first allowed these groups to donate to campaigns. In their ruling, the court also struck down prior limits to corporate independent expenditures which effectively allowed corporations and individuals to indirectly spend unrestricted amounts of money on political campaigns. The United States Supreme Court

(SCOTUS) decided that allowing unlimited spending would not lead to corruption in elections because corporations would be transparent in their spending. However, this is not the case, as the Citizens United v. The FEC case has allowed corporations to influence elections through billions of dollars in contributions, suppressing American opinions.

Super PACs, which are independent expenditure-only committees that accept unlimited contributions and are known to influence elections, can easily bypass the Supreme Court's transparency requirement. For example, in the 2024 presidential election, Musk donated 250 million dollars to super PACs supporting the Trump campaign. Although these committees must be transparent regarding their funding sources, they can report donations from dark money groups that do not disclose their donors. The Future Forward PAC reported a 205 million dollar donation from a dark-money group to the FEC in the past election.

Unrestricted donations, which are often hidden or lack transparency, undermine American democracy as they amplify the voices of wealthy donors while marginalizing ordinary citizens. Allowing such a dynamic skews politicians' policies to serve the interests of a few wealthy donors and corporations rather than the interests of the majority of the American electorate. More so, such secrecy leads to a lack of public trust in elected officials as well as a diminishment in the integrity of politicians.

Although the principle of freedom of speech in Citizens United v. The FEC is important, when regarding corporate political contributions, there must be restrictions to prevent unfair influence in elections.

(Sources: AP News, BBC, Campaign Legal, NPR, NY Times)



Saul argues all genders should use resistance training

by Megan Saul
Culture Editor



Exercise is one of the most important activities people can do for both their mental and physical health. Whether simply taking a walk outside or participating in a sport, any type of workout has immense benefits. Despite the advantages of exercise, many people have incorrect assumptions and misconceptions about what type of workouts

they should do based on their gender and physical goals, including, for example, the belief that weightlifting is only meant for men aiming to build muscle. Instead, teens should lift heavier weights and practice a variety of exercises in order to set healthy habits that will improve both mental and physical health as they grow.

There are many myths about the effects of lifting heavy weights and resistance training that have stopped people from doing these types of exercises. For instance, people fear that lifting weights will simply build muscle, creating unwanted bulk. This is untrue as building muscle takes a lot more effort and work than just lifting heavy weights. Although men are scientifically proven to be more muscular than women, this doesn't come from resistance training. Instead, it comes from having higher testosterone levels. It is extremely difficult for people with low testosterone levels to gain muscle; therefore, lifting heavy weights will not immediately produce this effect. On the

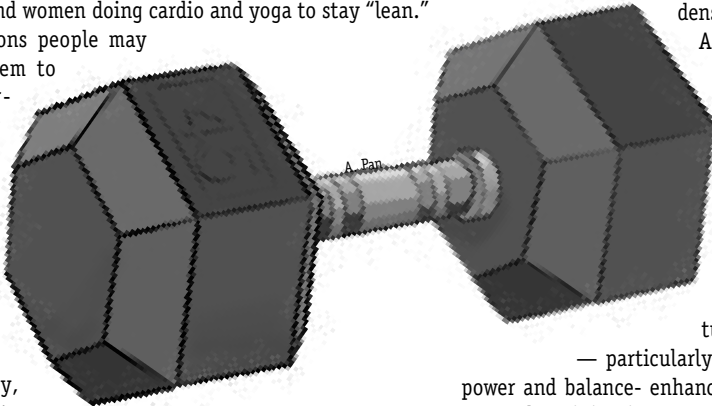
other hand, women are more flexible than men due to having more elastic muscles. This often leads females to favor exercises such as yoga and pilates over men, making it a predominantly female activity. Despite these facts, people should not be confined to doing a certain exercise based on their gender, such as men lifting weights to build strength and women doing cardio and yoga to stay "lean."

Other misconceptions people may have that lead them to avoid these exercise regimens may be that they are too difficult and complicated or that the sport is solely for men. Women began weightlifting in the Olympics in 2000, and today, thousands compete on national and international levels, showing that it is not a sport solely designed for men. Resistance exercises and strength training come with many benefits. The National Library of Medicine conducted a study observing the relationship between muscle fitness and cognitive

ageing within female twins. It found that "leg power predicts both cognitive ageing and global brain structure." This study suggests that muscle strength and fitness, as measured by leg power, are directly related to cognitive strength. On top of improving mental health, resistance training also increases bone density by stimulating bone-building cells.

As a result, it decreases the chances of developing osteoporosis, a disease that weakens bones and increases the risk of fractures or breaks. According to a blog by Harvard Health, "strength training, in particular, has bone benefits beyond those offered by aerobic weight-bearing exercise. It targets bones of the hips, spine, and wrists, which are the sites most likely to fracture. What's more, resistance workouts

— particularly those that include moves emphasizing power and balance—enhance strength and stability." Additionally, strength training improves cardiovascular health, joint health and posture, and metabolic health. Overall, everyone should practice strength training and diversify their workouts in order to improve their mental and physical health, despite preconceived assumptions regarding the lack of benefits it brings to women in particular. (Sources: CNet, National Institutes of Health, NPR)



Microplastics are dangerous

by Jane Wilde
News Editor



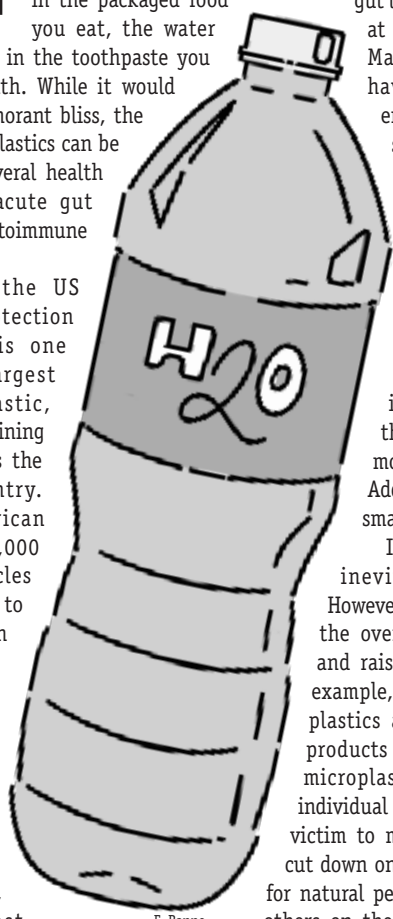
Over the last few decades, microplastics have become increasingly unavoidable. Whether you like it or not, it's in the packaged food you eat, the water you drink, and even in the toothpaste you brush your teeth with. While it would be nice to live in ignorant bliss, the reality is that microplastics can be a direct cause of several health issues, including acute gut inflammation and autoimmune abnormalities.

According to the US Environmental Protection Agency, the US is one of the world's largest consumers of plastic, simultaneously retaining its nefarious title as the unhealthiest country. The average American consumes over 70,000 microplastic particles a year, as opposed to the average person at 40,000 particles. Not only is the US one of the largest plastic consumers, but American culture encourages plastic usage due to plastic's recyclability, relatively low cost, and convenience.

One of the most concerning and prominent consequences of microplastic consumption is gut

issues. The gut is home to trillions of microbes, fungi, and good bacteria that help the body digest food. However, the introduction of microplastics encourages the growth of harmful bacteria, which triggers a bacterial imbalance and disrupts the gut microbiome. This means poor digestion, Irritable bowel disease, and even autoimmune diseases as a result of damaging the gut lining. According to IBS specialist at the Mount Sinai Health Center, Manasi Argawal "Microplastics have been accumulating in our environment at an alarming rate since the 1950s, but it is only in the last few years that we have started to recognize their pervasive effects on human health." Mount Sinai specialists add that an experiment was conducted in which researchers obtained fecal samples from 53 people with IBD and 50 healthy individuals. They found that those with IBD had significantly more microplastics in the sample. Additionally, those without IBD had smaller-sized microplastic particles.

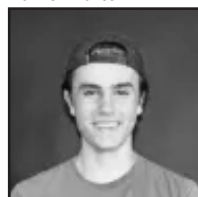
Is chemical consumption inevitable? Unfortunately, yes. However, there are methods to control the overconsumption of microplastics and raise awareness on the issue. For example, a national ban on single-use plastics and microplastics in cleaning products would help further eradicate microplastics in the US. In regard to individual health concerns, to avoid falling victim to microplastics, it's imperative to cut down on plastic food packaging and opt for natural personal care products. Educating others on the consequences of microplastics is also essential, as it's increasingly normalized in everyday American society. (Sources: BBC, Gnews, Healthcentral)



F. Banno

Disregard social media nutritionists

by Nelson Kramer
Humor Editor



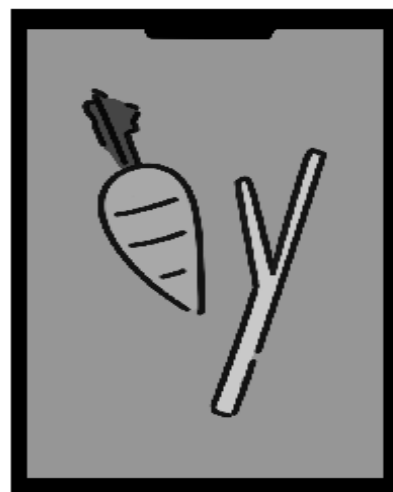
As a nation, we spend so much time online sorting through blatant lies in politics and world news. Yet, all this exposure to misinformation has failed to prepare us for the newest trend in

deception: social media nutritionists. Self-proclaimed dietitians online often spread misinformation to get more views. We credulously believe information that has no backed research; people too readily accept that the American population is fat solely because we haven't switched to a carnivorous diet. These unverified doctors and so-called nutritionists have exploited America's most significant vulnerabilities: our aspiration for health, our fixation on weight loss, and our desire for convenience. It is time that we start questioning the voices we hear behind these videos; the American health crisis is more serious than portrayed on social media and needs to be addressed through solutions beyond unsustainable dieting trends.

It is safe to say that social media is a dangerous influence that affects the world almost entirely in a negative way. Recent trends in health and fitness highlight this damage by spreading nonsense about what consumers are doing wrong. Videos that fantasize about easy weight loss methods rope in millions of views for an obvious reason: health experts consider 75 percent of the US to be overweight and a staggering 40 percent

are medically obese. While many people access current events through social media, much of the content is unhelpful and fails to address the real issues. Most of the nutrition videos online exist only to exploit their viewers for likes, views, and possibly money.

Weight loss, once defined as a method toward improving health is now in many cases an obsessive fad. By the 1920s, this cultural obsession gained popularity due to shifting beauty standards that idolize thinness, along with a decline in the American population's overall health. Over time, being thin became synonymous with success, discipline, and beauty, pushing people toward restrictive diets and quick fixes. This cultural shift opened the door for industries — and now influencers — to profit from society's obsession with body image, often at the expense of genuine health and well-being.



F. Banno

Misinformation spreads rapidly online. From extreme fasting to raw meat diets, influencers offer oversimplified solutions to complex health issues. Influencers deliver these claims, rarely grounded in science, with confidence and aesthetic appeal, making them easy to believe. As a result, many people dismiss legitimate medical advice in favor of viral content from unqualified sources.

To protect public health, American consumers must approach online health content with skepticism and prioritize credible, science-backed sources. Without critical thinking, misinformation will continue to shape harmful habits and unrealistic expectations. True progress toward American health comes when we value the opinions of our doctors over influencers paid by label brands. (Sources: American Heart Association, AP News, Deakin University, NPR, Science Direct)

People should build up each other's genuine success

Siyona Singhal
News Editor



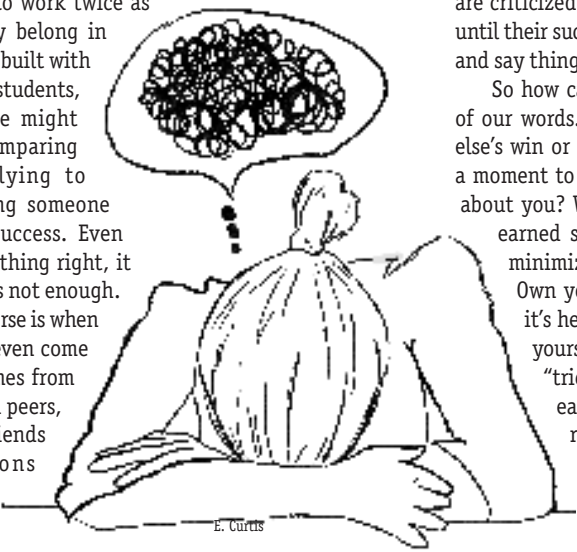
As college acceptances are rolling in, you may hear phrases such as, "They only got in because of their race" or "You had a better chance of being accepted because of your gender." Even if you score well on a test, someone might say it's just luck rather than hard work. Impostor syndrome describes the feeling of self-doubt and believing that one's success is undeserved, despite evidence that says otherwise. It's a psychological experience that can cause even the most successful of people to second-guess themselves. People should be less quick to attribute others' successes to factors such as race or gender.

Harsh comments that imply one does not deserve their success are harmful and dangerous. Often, people don't know the whole story of someone's life, and saying things like "They just got lucky" can be ignorant. Hard work, perseverance, and talent matter. Most people earn what they achieve. Impostor syndrome and dismissive comments overshadow that fact. It tells people they're only "good enough" because someone else wasn't. It pits students against each other, tearing down rather than lifting up.

A study by Brown University revealed that up to 70 percent of people will experience impostor syndrome at some point in their lives.

It doesn't just affect students; it affects professionals, artists, athletes, leaders, and even teachers. It's especially common among high-achieving individuals and disproportionately impacts women, people of color, and first-generation students, who already have to work twice as hard to prove they belong in spaces that weren't built with them in mind. For students, impostor syndrome might show up when comparing test scores, applying to colleges, or hearing someone undermine their success. Even when you do everything right, it can still feel like it's not enough.

What makes it worse is when the doubt doesn't even come from within; it comes from other people. When peers, adults, or even friends make assumptions about why someone succeeded, they're



E. Curtis

pushing their own insecurity or bias onto others. And too often, people begin to question their value, intelligence, and right to be proud of what they've done. We live in a culture that emphasizes competition over celebration. We're told to be the best, but then we are criticized for acknowledging our strengths. We cheer people on until their success makes us uncomfortable. And then we turn around and say things like, "You probably only got in because you're a girl."

So how can we fix this? First, we need to recognize the power of our words. If you've ever found yourself downplaying someone else's win or making assumptions about why they succeeded, take a moment to reflect. What does that comment say about them, or about you? Why is it so hard to accept that someone might have earned something fair and square? Second, we need to stop minimizing our own achievements. Celebrate your hard work. Own your success. It's not arrogant to be proud of yourself; it's healthy. And when impostor syndrome creeps in, remind yourself of the facts: you've earned where you are. You didn't "trick" your way into anything. Finally, we need to support each other. Compliment your peers, hype them up, and remind them how capable they are.

A simple "Congrats, I know you worked hard to get this," or "You deserve this!" can go a long way in cultivating a supportive environment. (Source: Brown University)

Casal argues students should not wear AirPods during class

by Claudia Casal
Culture Editor



While wearing AirPods in class may be considered harmless or helpful, this small act often undermines focus, learning, and meaningful social engagement. As someone who has been on both sides of this issue, I understand the appeal of wearing headphones or AirPods in class. Most of the time however, headphones hinder a student's ability to participate in class; therefore, schools should have stricter policies toward headphone usage during instruction.

Studies show that many students learn more effectively by hearing the information. Wearing AirPods interferes with this channel and many students' ability to learn effectively. Moreover, according to the Medical College of Wisconsin, our brain can only process a limited amount of information at once. Listening to music during lessons splits your attention as your brain has to juggle the music alongside the teacher's instructions, leading to cognitive overload and an inability to absorb new material.

When I talk to someone wearing AirPods, I get the impression that they are only half present. Additionally, when I have a conversation wearing AirPods myself, it is significantly harder to fully engage with the other party. Wearing AirPods sends the signal of aversion

to social interaction, which discourages conversations and collaboration. It also leads to many students missing little moments of their peers' vulnerability or humor, which are vital to the classroom environment and a student's developing emotional intelligence.

Additionally, consistently wearing AirPods in class can hinder your relationship with teachers and staff members. Although it is common to wear headphones regularly among high schoolers,

teachers often view them as disrespectful, especially during lessons. It can erode mutual respect and trust, making students reach out less for help. From a teacher's perspective, it can be difficult to gauge if a student is actually engaged. Geometry and calculus teacher **DeLynne O'Toole** commented, "I do have some students that can focus better on their homework with music so when there's time to work on homework in my class, it's fine. Then, I have a few students who don't behave responsibly and have them in while I'm teaching. How can you listen to music and still listen to instruction?" Even if only one student begins wearing AirPods during lessons, others may follow their example, which impairs the teacher's ability to maintain their classroom culture. AirPods interfere with the connection between students and teachers.

While AirPods do have their place during work time in class, they should not be used during direct instruction, class discussions, and small group work. To strengthen learning, engagement, and relationships in the classroom, we need to take the AirPods out. (Sources: Department of Education Psychology, Medical College of Wisconsin)



E. Curtis

HUNT FOR IN OUR

Whether looking for a new artist to listen to, a movie to watch, or another easter egg, the culture section is the place to go. Like the spoilers given about *The White Lotus*, these spoilers will lead you to the egg, so be aware. We all know that bears like honey, but did you know that they also like eggs? Look closely, as it may not be easy to see!

Megan Saul,
Culture Editor



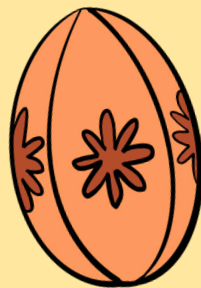
They say one person's trash is another person's treasure, and this is especially true for you... Mr. Herrera and his hardworking team found a special treat: a sparkling egg on the front lawn. Luckily for you, they hid it right in plain sight among vibrant spring time flowers. Look closely, and you might find your very own treasure.

Kloe Adams,
Editorial Editor



Among the vast accounts of personal beliefs, desires, and thoughts that spur change forward, one image doesn't fit in. Just like the story of why nutritionist influencers should not be trusted, searching above this article will lead you to the egg.

Dylan Wadhwa,
Opinion Editor



Turn to this page and follow your fate - where the luck is so bad it makes comedy so great. Spill your drink, miss your bus, or get trapped in your garage. The egg is tucked in with a chaotic collage.

Nelson Kramer,
Humor Editor



**HIDDEN IN EACH
PAPER IS AN EAS
TO BE FOUND. USE
IF YOU CAN FIND**

FOR EGGS PAPER!

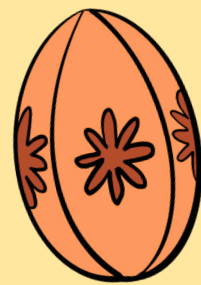


SECTION OF THE
TER EGG WAITING
THE CLUES TO SEE
ALL 9 OF THEM!



You will find the egg alongside a master of math. She makes equations easy and helps students find their paths. Whether you're a math prodigy or master of none, she will nurture your growth and teach you one plus one. Though graduating from college as a slug, her name rhymes with the UCLA mascot, which, if friendly, would give a great bear hug.

Kat Littfin,
News Editor



Among the many faces lies one unfamiliar image. Peering out from behind upon the four LGHS students highlighted on this page, the egg observes the many intriguing hobbies and interests of these students. From track and field to Armenian dancing, the egg can see it all from above. Keep your eyes peeled and look closely, for it might be hidden in the most obvious place.

Isabella Langner,
People Editor



In lands far, where breaking news takes flight, your egg waits just out of sight. Look where the world unfolds—your prize is hidden in shiny gold. Peering out from underneath a groundbreaking story, the egg hides, waiting for you to achieve glory. Keep your eyes out for the egg's disguise, or you won't find the ultimate prize.

Atharava Pandey,
National Editor

In the midst of the sports section, amid the action shots of LG student-athletes, tales of hard-fought victories, and stories of devastating losses, one image stands apart from the rest. Peering down on the rest of the page, LG swimmers smile brightly, showcasing their school pride during a meet. Located above the article of the ongoing swim and dive season, this photo banner may hold just what you are looking for.

Jordan Park,
Sports Editor



- Rawlings discusses Paddington in Peru
- Perez releases debut studio album

CULTURE

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NETFLIX RELEASES BRITISH DRAMA ADOLESCENCE

by **Kat Littfin**
News Editor

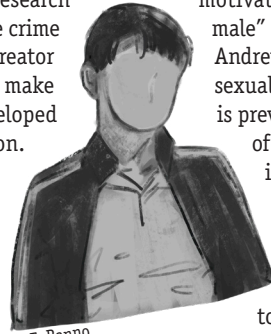
The new British drama *Adolescence* has already received critical acclaim. Netflix released the show on Mar. 13, and it has since garnered almost 100 million views. The series features stellar acting performances, pertinent and relevant topics, and technically intricate production elements, making it a must-watch for all audiences.

Adolescence opens with a heated and tense scene: police forcibly enter a seemingly nondescript English home in search of 13-year-old Jamie Miller (Owen Cooper), whom they accuse of stabbing classmate Katie Leonard. Immediately, the atmosphere of the show is intense, as law enforcement officials interrogate Jamie and officially accuse him of stabbing his classmate with incriminating video evidence. The series is relatively short, including four one-hour episodes, each one focusing on a different facet of Jamie's community affected by his crime. *Adolescence* strays from the typical whodunit trope so often portrayed in TV crime dramas, as it is explicitly clear throughout the series that Jamie is guilty of stabbing his classmate. It instead focuses on the psychological

impact that a violent crime has on a variety of individuals and the factors that provoke such actions in seemingly non-violent people.

The making of *Adolescence* featured an abundance of research and skilled production. The recent increase in violent knife crime in England and "alpha male" internet content inspired co-creator Stephen Graham, who plays Jamie's father in the series, to make a call-to-action piece. Graham and writer Jack Thorne developed the story, and director Phillip Barattini aided with production. Each episode of the series was filmed in one shot, meaning that there were no cuts or CGI piecing scenes together. This made the process of creating an episode extremely taxing, and some episodes had to be reshot up to 16 times. Despite the many takes actors had to run through, *Adolescence* features deeply powerful and convincing acting. Cooper had never acted before *Adolescence*, yet he performed intensely emotional and dialogue-dense scenes throughout the show. Erin Doherty, who plays the criminal psychologist who speaks with Jamie, and Graham also gave notable performances, both having stirring dialogue and poignant acting scenes.

While being a gripping and touching show, *Adolescence* portrays many relevant topics. As previously mentioned, part of Jamie's motivation to kill his classmate stems from "alpha male" content fed to him through individuals such as Andrew Tate, influencing Jamie's view of women as sexual objects and subordinate beings. Such content is prevalent on the internet and has influenced a slew of misogynistic ideology, becoming more embedded in teen culture. *Adolescence* depicts how such messaging can spur violence and destruction in young men. The series also touches on generational trauma, as Jamie's father realizes that he may have passed on his inherited temperament to his son. Events after his son's imprisonment



F. Banno

force him to face his guilt and accept that he alone was not to blame for his son's violence and devastating loss of innocence.

If you are looking for a new show to watch (and possibly binge and finish in a day), consider watching *Adolescence*. (Sources: Wikipedia, Netflix)

RAWLINGS REVIEWS PADDINGTON IN PERU

by **Margo Rawlings**
Editor-in-Chief

While it is certainly difficult to outshine *Paddington* and *Paddington 2*, the bear that previously captured viewers' hearts has returned to the big screen for a third time. *Paddington Bear*, one of the few animated characters with an impressive ability to enamor audiences of all ages, first made his debut in the original 2014 film, based on the 1958 novel *A Bear Called Paddington*. Known for his trademark blue coat, red hat, and love for marmalade, *Paddington* travels from Peru to London, where he meets the Brown family. In the sequel, *Paddington* is mistakenly accused of burglary when shopping for a present for his Aunt Lucy's 100th birthday. Fans adored the second film, arguably more than the first, even scoring it an impressive 99 percent on Rotten Tomatoes.

Almost seven years later, *Paddington* has returned to theaters throughout March and April, bringing the beautiful fantasy back to life. *Paddington in Peru* takes *Paddington* and his British family back to his homeland, exploring the cultural legends

Aunt Lucy. He discovers El Dorado isn't riches or gold, but rather a sanctuary for El Dorado bears like himself.

Paddington in Peru emphasizes the importance of identity. *Paddington's* discovery of the El Dorado bears allows him to finally understand his heritage. This gives him a newfound sense of peace and home. Reunited with his tribe, he faces the dilemma of whether to remain with his blood family or return to London with the Browns. Although it initially seems like *Paddington* will stay, he ultimately decides to return to London as he believes the Browns are his true family.

Having now watched all three movies, I can safely say that *Paddington* will never cease to entertain me. From his witty comments to his adorable marmalade sandwiches, *Paddington* continues to be one of the most charismatic characters to grace audiences. I definitely enjoyed watching the third film and appreciated the impressive animation, but nothing beats the original movie. There's something special about *Paddington's* first appearance on the silver screen that makes *Paddington (2014)* impossible to beat.

You can find *Paddington in Peru* in theaters nearby or stream it now on Max.



A. Pan

The White Lotus season three concludes

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

Warning: spoilers ahead for *The White Lotus*

The season finale of *The White Lotus* concluded with a series of twists and revelations, leaving me both in shock and in confusion, as many questions remained unanswered. Extending the episode length to 90 minutes, writer and director Mike White jam-packed the finale with comedic, entertaining, and suspenseful moments.

Defying my expectations, the girls' group had their happy ending. Throughout their trip at the Thailand resort, the relationships of childhood best friends Kate, Laurie, and Jaclyn appear on the cusp of falling apart. When Jaclyn, a married woman, hooks up with resort employee Valentin after encouraging recently divorced Laurie to go after him, the friend group seems irreparable. Yet despite all the tension and issues, Laurie admits at dinner in the final episode how much she values her friendships with Kate and Jaclyn who help bring meaning to her life. Following this long monologue, all their issues disappear, and mystifyingly, they become closer than ever as if they weren't just complaining about how Kate is a "Trumpie," how Laurie's life is pathetic, or how Jaclyn is completely selfish. Although most people wouldn't be able to understand this strange dynamic, I loved this moment for them. Yes, they all kinda hate each other on the downlow, but their girlhood friendship outlasts all drama.

The Ratliffs also seemed to turn out all right in the end, considering the many devastating outcomes that could have occurred. Throughout the season, I couldn't help but feel bad for the dad, Timothy Ratliff. While the FBI is investigating him for embezzlement and taking away all of his money over intentional fraudulent choices, Timothy is just a chill guy trying to enjoy his vacation with his family. With the FBI seizing all of his money and property, Timothy feels

defeated. He continuously pops the anti-anxiety pill Lorazepam to numb his feelings, as his family inadvertently reminds him that they depend on a wealthy lifestyle. In one of my favorite lines from the season, the mom Victoria Ratliff tells Timothy, "I just don't think at this age I'm meant to live an uncomfortable life." Only the youngest son, Lochlan Ratliff, tells his dad that he could live without being wealthy. In a questionably



E. Curtis

written moment, Timothy attempts to poison everyone in the family except Lochlan with toxic fruit in a blender, believing that the others could not live after finding out all their money is gone; however, he decides against it at the last minute. The next morning, Lochlan accidentally poisons himself by using the blender full of remnants of the poisonous fruit to make a protein shake, but he miraculously survives. Despite almost dying, the family leaves the resort the next day like nothing happened, still unaware of their money crisis, a plot point which overall didn't make sense and felt rushed.

The episode ended with the reveal of the shooting victims: the beloved characters Rick and Chelsea. Ultimately, the death of this duo made sense, but it didn't create as much of an impact as the deaths in previous seasons. Rick could never get over the death of his dad, believing it ruined his life. Sticking to this belief, Rick intended to ruin his own future to get revenge, putting himself and Chelsea, who really cared about him at risk. The twist that the believed murderer of his father was actually his father played into a cliché trope that dampened the plot of the third season.

Although the third season of *The White Lotus* kept me thoroughly entertained, episodes felt drawn out and repetitive due to the two additional episodes, while the finale ended up being too abrupt. Although the third season is still a worthy watch, I highly recommend the second season of *The White Lotus* over the third.

Grande releases *Eternal Sunshine Deluxe: Brighter Days Ahead*

by **Jane Wilde**
Public Relations Manager

On Mar. 28, Ariana Grande released the deluxe version of her seventh studio album, *Eternal Sunshine*, titled *Brighter Days Ahead*. Just hours before the release of her deluxe album, Grande came out with a short film also titled *Brighter Days Ahead*. The 26-minute movie features cuts from her album, including *Twilight Zone* and *Intro (End of the World)*. The short centers around loss, growth, and, most prominently, the bittersweet nature of nostalgia. Grande's deluxe album encompasses memories and the past as its main themes.

Track 15, *Twilight Zone*, is named after the television series written and directed by Rod Sterling and provides many allusions to the series, specifically in the first verse when she sings, "Is this a black and white scene? If so then I'm in the gray one," referring to the television show's black and white coloring. The first verse also includes a direct reference to the show through the line, "Did I dream the whole thing, was that just a nightmare? Dif-

ferent dimensions?" Additionally, the bridge says, "Sometimes I just can't believe you happened." Through her intentional storytelling, the song explores the role of disbelief and denial in heartbreak, and the ways in which she navigated the end of her relationship with her former husband, Dalton Gomez.

Hampstead, a personal favorite track of mine, starts with the line, "I left my heart at a pub in Hampstead," the city in north London where she resided while filming *Wicked*. The song follows calming piano melodies and a faint accompaniment of violins. She ends the chorus with the lyrics, "I'd rather be seen and alive than dying from your point of view." She follows that melody at the end with the line, "I'd rather be swimming with you than drowning in a crowded room." These lyrics represent a beautiful transition in her healing journey.

Track 17, *Dandelion*, commences with a loud trombone sound that transitions into a fast-paced beat that really sets the tone for the song. Grande reverts to her more R&B style, with fans deeming this as her "trapiana" persona emerging. In the past, Grande was ridiculed for failing to announce her lyrics; however, after the soprano opera training she went through for *Wicked*,

she no longer mumbles or drags her words, which provides a newfound opportunity to appreciate her lyricism. However, the one aspect this song lacks is metaphoric and complex lyricism. It's similar to her old albums like *Dangerous Woman*, with mainly surface-level verses. This song is rumored to be about Grande's *Wicked* co-star, Ethan Slater, as his ex-wife is named Lili, another type of flower.

While the 16th track, *Warm*, includes well-written lyrics, it lacks a catchy melody and sounds generic and relatively similar to the rest of her discography. *Intro (End of the World)*, a track on *Eternal Sunshine*, is included in an extended form.

A particular aspect of the deluxe album to appreciate is Grande's evolution in songwriting. While the singer is famous for her stellar vocals, her songwriting is just as impressive. She effectively tells a story in each track that conveys the overall message while still making the lyrics ambiguous enough to be poetic. The songs are almost ethereal with many angelic harmonies. This album symbolizes Grande's transition from pop princess to a more mature, healed version of herself. While there are some areas in need of improvement, overall, this album is definitely worth holding space for in 2025. (Source: Variety)



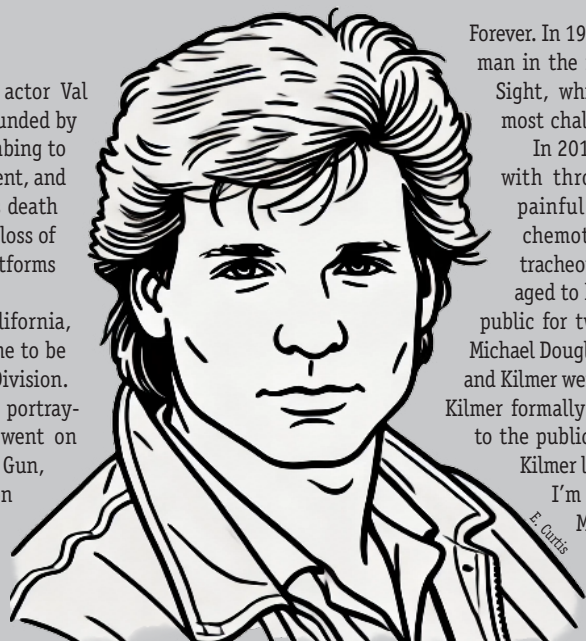
F. Banno

Hollywood actor Val Kilmer passes away

by Katie Borders
National/World Editor

At the age of 65, renowned American actor Val Kilmer tragically passed away on Apr. 1, surrounded by friends and family in Los Angeles after succumbing to pneumonia. Known for his charisma, acting talent, and prominent place in the film industry, Kilmer's death prompted co-stars and fans alike to mourn the loss of Kilmer, coming out on various social media platforms to commend the late public figure.

Born Dec. 31, 1959, in Los Angeles, California, Kilmer became the youngest person at the time to be accepted into the Juilliard School's Drama Division. His first big break was his role in *Top Secret*, portraying an American rock and roll star. Kilmer went on to be cast as Tom "Iceman" Kazansky in *Top Gun*, alongside Tom Cruise. Grossing over 344 million dollars worldwide, *Top Gun* became a major hit, making Kilmer a Hollywood star. Kilmer went on to star in various other films, most notably becoming Michael Keaton's successor as Batman in the 1995 movie *Batman*



Forever. In 1999, Kilmer played a blind man in the romantic drama *At First Sight*, which he described as his most challenging role.

In 2015, Kilmer was diagnosed with throat cancer, undergoing painful treatments, including chemotherapy, radiation, and tracheotomy. While Kilmer managed to keep his cancer from the public for two years, in 2017, after Michael Douglas disclosed that both he and Kilmer were battling throat cancer, Kilmer formally disclosed his condition to the public through a Reddit Q&A. Kilmer later released his memoir, *I'm Your Huckleberry: A Memoir*, in which he shared stories behind his most beloved roles, discussing his battle with his cancer

diagnosis, reminiscing about his career, and recounting his rise to fame.

In 2021, Kilmer underwent a tracheostomy that permanently damaged his speaking voice. The next year, Kilmer reprised his role as Iceman in the 2022 *Top Gun Sequel*, *Top Gun: Maverick*. The film was a huge success, grossing a total of 1.495 billion dollars worldwide. During the film, Kilmer memorably brought his real-life struggles to the screen as Iceman deals with advanced throat cancer and eventually passes away during the sequel. In his reprisal of Iceman in *Top Gun: Maverick*, Kilmer worked with a team of engineers from the company Sonantic to construct an accurate model of his lost voice using AI.

Following the late public figure's passing, numerous co-stars came out to pay tribute to Kilmer. Kilmer's co-star in *Batman Forever*, Josh Brolin, wrote, "You were a smart, challenging, brave, uber-creative firecracker. There's not a lot left of those. I hope to see you up there in the heavens when I eventually get there." Director Dylan Park Pettiford commented about Kilmer's passing as well, referencing Kilmer's past roles: "Val Kilmer had me wanting to fly fighter jets, be Batman, rob banks, and hunt lions as a kid. They don't make too many movie stars like him anymore. Generational." (Sources: CNN, NBC, Wikipedia)

Grant Perez releases debut album

By Sahil Muthukrishnan
Sports Editor

On Mar. 28, Australasian Performing Right Association (APRA) award-winning singer and songwriter Grant Perez, known professionally as grentperez, released his new album, *Backflips in a Restaurant*. The project is his long-awaited debut studio album with his label Fast Friends. The singer previously released four extended plays: *Demo(s) about Love*, *Conversations with the Moon*, *Trail Mix Tape EP*, and *When We Were Younger*. Perez gained notability for his hit single *Cherry Wine*, which peaked at number 14 on the UK's physical singles chart and went viral on short-form content platforms like TikTok.

Perez's new album is a mixed-genre record with 13 songs. He delivers a sound that is nostalgic and new at the same time, reeling in listeners with an infectious tone and great hooks. Perez crafts an air of love sickness on the album that previous listeners appreciate him for, but he puts a twist on his usual genre in some tracks, such as the song *2dk*. *2dk* mixes smooth sax riffs with a hip-hop track, which Perez uses to create a relaxed giddiness. The track describes a first hook-up with a bar goer and the excitement of recounting it to a friend. *Movie Scene* is another standout. The song leans into rhythm and blues more than pop as Perez gushes about a perfect lover that is "straight out of a movie scene." Another great track is *12065*, which Perez

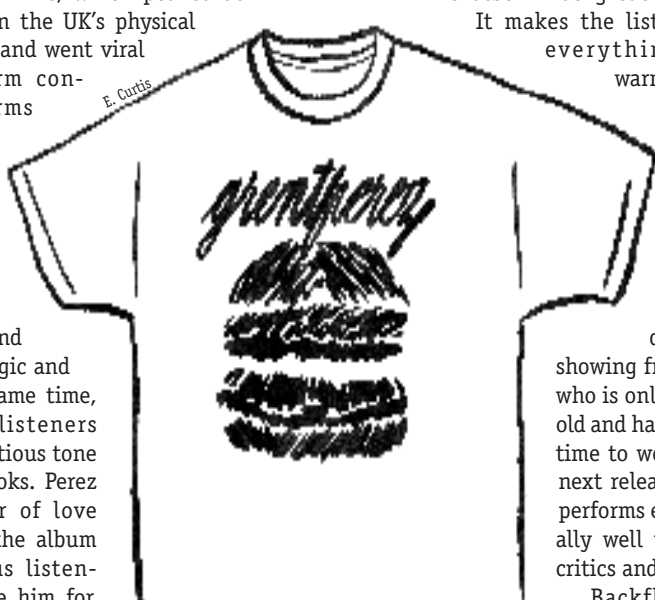
named after the zip code of Clifton Park, New York. The song features soothing vocals and a comforting, ethereal feel. In *12065*, Perez sings about the feeling of longing in a long-distance relationship: "How does it feel all alone with that hole in your bed... Making shapes with your body in the space that I left?" Other notable tracks include the twinkling *Need You Around*, the Ruel duet *Dandelion*, and the silky *Falling for a Friend*. Every song features Perez's wonderful vocal tone, creating continuity between diverse songs.

The album has great variance. It makes the listener feel everything from

warm comfort to hyper excitement to cool despair.

It is certainly a tremendous first showing from Perez, who is only 23 years old and has plenty of time to work on his next release. It also performs exceptionally well with both critics and listeners.

Backflips in a Restaurant reached number three on the Australian Recording Industry Association (ARIA) albums chart, a milestone for the singer as his very first top ten debut. This album is an exciting initial foray into the full-length album space for Perez. Many fans eagerly anticipate Perez's next project, but while they wait, *Backflips in a Restaurant* is an enjoyable way to tide them over. (Sources: ARIA, Billboard, NME, Rolling Stone Australia)



COLLINS PUBLISHES NOVEL

by Quinn Hathaway
National/World Editor

Suzanne Collins released a new addition to the *Hunger Games* series on Mar. 18, a prequel to the original trilogy titled *Sunrise on the Reaping*. The trilogy of *The Hunger Games*, *Catching Fire*, and *The Mockingjay* debuted in 2008, 2009, and 2010, respectively. The first prequel, *The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes*, was published in 2020. While the series immediately drew avid readers in, it reached a wider audience range when the movie versions of the books hit theaters.

The *Hunger Games* was the first novel of the series to acquire a movie adaptation in 2012, with Gary Ross directing the film and Ross and Collins co-writing the script. The movie reached a rating of 84 percent on Rotten Tomatoes and skyrocketed the careers of Jennifer Lawrence and Josh Hutcherson. Lawrence plays the protagonist, Katniss Everdeen, and Hutcherson takes on the male lead of Peeta Mellark. The film and the novel have very little deviation in plot; both showcase a dystopian society under a totalitarian regime. An annual lottery draws the names of twelve teenagers, who become the contestants of a game where only one survives. All of the novels and subsequent films follow different years of the *Hunger Games*, each different from the prior. The futuristic society quickly intrigued viewers, leading to substantial box office sales.

The second and third film adaptations were released in 2013, 2014, and 2015, with the third film divided into two parts. The first prequel, *The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes*, followed the first film's antagonist, Corniolanus Snow, during his

childhood, depicting a twisted love story and a different set of *Hunger Games*. This novel received a movie adaptation more recently, released on Nov. 23, 2023. However, the movie received only 64 percent on Rotten Tomatoes and faced minor controversy over its apparent rehumanization of the first movie's villain.

Scholastic originally announced the existence of a new Collins book on Jun. 6, and the *Hunger Games* universe finally received the addition this March. The new prequel details a separate *Hunger Games*, following a prominent character, Haymitch Abernathy, from the original trilogy. The novel paints the scene of an unlikely rebellion, detailing astute propaganda and an authoritarian society. So far, the novel has received positive feedback and is set to be turned into a movie debuting on Nov. 20, 2026. Francis Lawrence, the director of

Catching Fire, *Mockingjay: Part One*, and *Mockingjay: Part Two*, enlisted to direct *Sunrise on the Reaping*. Lawrence commented, "[The crew is] very excited. We've been working on this draft for a year. We start shooting in July." The cast has not yet been confirmed.

Since her first work in 1991, Collins has made a huge impact on the literary world. Readers have quickly acclaimed *Sunrise on the Reaping* as a similarly impressive caliber of work. Collins, preferring to stay mainly out of the public eye, has not commented on whether she has any other novels in the works as of now. (Sources: NY Times, The Guardian)



Strahs raves about a Minecraft Movie

by Hayley Strahs
News Editor

On Apr. 4, *A Minecraft Movie* premiered in theaters across the world. After nearly a decade of delays, the highly anticipated film decimated the box office in its opening weekend, becoming the second highest grossing video game movie in history. The story centers around the classic sandbox game *Minecraft* in which players can build structures, fight monsters, explore vast caves, and more.

Prior to the movie's release, fans of the popular game franchise were ecstatic to see their favorite characters come to life. Steve (Jack Black) is *Minecraft*'s default avatar, evoking a strong sense of nostalgia in many players. Likewise, many of Black's lines as Steve in the film have gone viral on social media sites. The comically-timed phrases "I am Steve" and "chicken jockey," along with more references to the game demonstrate the movie's care and appreciation of loyal *Minecraft* fans. Moreover, a group of beloved *Minecraft* influencers made special appearances within the movie itself, including Daniel Robert Middleton (DanTDM), Jessica Bravura (Aphmau), Elizabeth Dwyer (LDShadowLady), and Oliver Brotherhood (Mumbo Jumbo). These creators' content helped popularize the game in its early years, laying the foundation for its now massive fandom.

In addition to Steve, *A Minecraft Movie* also follows the story of Natalie (Emma Myers) and her brother, Henry (Sebastian Eugene Hansen), after they move to Steve's hometown of Chuglass following

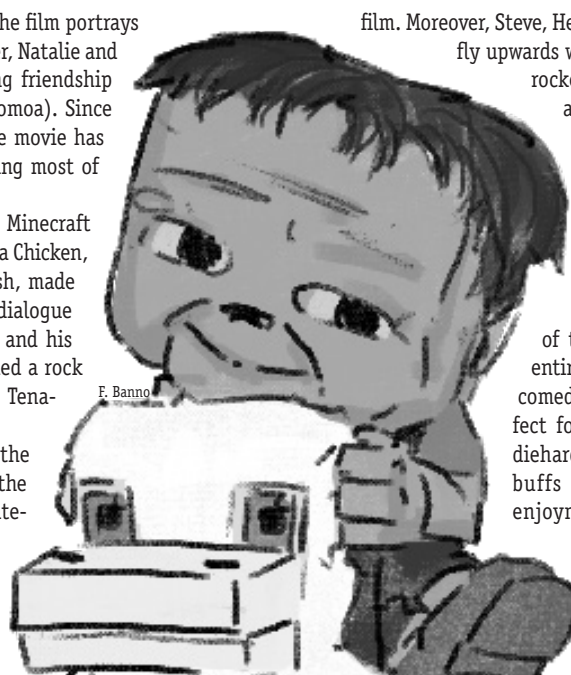
their mom's death. Amidst its humor and silliness, the film portrays their struggles in a seemingly heartfelt way. However, Natalie and Henry's grief acts as a side plot to Henry's budding friendship with professional gamer Garrett Garrison (Jason Momoa). Since the film is only one hour and 41 minutes long, the movie has little time to flesh out its emotional aspects, leaving most of Natalie's character unexplored.

To the surprise of many audience members, *A Minecraft Movie* included multiple musical numbers. Steve's *Lava Chicken*, a short tune about Black's character's signature dish, made waves across the internet similar to other witty dialogue from the film. Black — known for *School of Rock* and his two-person rock band, *Tenacious D* — also performed a rock number with Momoa with dance moves resembling *Tenacious D* music videos.

While the film draws most of its content from the *Minecraft* game, there are many inconsistencies in the motion picture that do not align with the source material. For instance, elytra wings are an accessory from the game that players can use to glide in the air or fly with the addition of firework rockets. Players can only acquire these wings through voyaging to the End, a dimension never mentioned in the movie, yet multiple characters don the wings in the

film. Moreover, Steve, Henry, and Garrett are able to fly upwards without the use of firework rockets while wearing elytras, and Steve has the ability to fly without one entirely, which creates even more plot holes, since the movie is presumed to take place in the vanilla survival mode.

For casual enjoyers of the franchise or new fans entirely, *A Minecraft Movie* is a comedic, lighthearted film perfect for a free afternoon. While diehard *Minecraft*ers and movie buffs might not derive much enjoyment from it, the movie undoubtedly accomplishes its goal of forming a fun story from the beloved game. (Sources: GameRant, IMDb, Variety)



- Strahs complains about cybertrucks
- Littfin ranks conspiracy theories

HUMOR

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Northrop lists her experiences with weird luck

by Ainsley Northrop
Editor-in-Chief

I've accepted the fact that I have "weird luck." No matter where I go or what I do, I always seem to wind up in strange situations, so here are a few of them.

One weekend, my friend and I volunteered at a food pantry, but there was no parking near the building. That's when we saw it, our saving grace: an empty Wendy's parking lot across the road. Scanning for towing signs and seeing none, we decided it was safe and headed into work. We walked out feeling content, but something was wrong. My friend's car was gone. Was it stolen? Did it somehow roll away? No. Someone had towed our ride home from the middle of San Jose. The

sign was upside down and behind a bush, and when we tried to call the phone number on it, it was discontinued. I can never look at a Wendy's again.

This summer, I went to my cousin's wedding. I was curling my hair as per usual when ouch! Somehow, I managed to burn myself, not on my neck or arm (like a normal person) but on my LEG. I was baffled. Now, for the rest of our trip, which included trekking across DC and NYC, I had a giant gash on my leg. Seeing that I was in

shorts for the hot weather, people kept asking what happened, and I had to admit that I burnt my thigh with a curling iron. How embarrassing. Now, every time I see my leg, I am greeted with a scar to remember the occasion.

I had another shock when my friend Eva and I signed up to run bingo at a senior home. When we arrived, the manager explained, "There is no bingo today - only a drum festival." We ended up watching a dancing drum group perform. Then, the leader taught the residents how to play a funeral march because it was "fitting." Looking around, I realized no one else was concerned. I mean, we were practically helping the elderly play their own requiem. Everyone just kept pounding away agreeably. How my day turned from bingo to beating out requiems and sipping cranberry juice, I could not tell you, but it was certainly one for the books.

The most recent of my unfortunate events was when I woke up early and tried to leave for school, but wound up leaving 30 minutes late. How? Well, I was locked in my garage! With my dad on a plane, my mom driving my sister to school, and my garage opener nowhere in sight, I began frantically pressing our automatic switch, pulling our emergency cord, and reconnecting the chain to the motor, all with no luck. My last class of Calculus review before the test was trickling away, and I was panicking. The motor was screaming at me uncontrollably - I had clearly made an error. I eventually escaped from the garage hoisting the door up by hand. When I triumphantly sat in my car and looked above me, I saw my garage door opener staring back. It was never lost. I was locked in the garage for no reason.



Gruetter depicts her hot pilates experience

by Sam Gruetter
Opinion Editor

On Jan.1 of the new year, I (overambitiously) decided to purchase a monthly subscription for a hot pilates studio. I was not aware these classes would entail sweating in places I didn't know existed and listening to seizure-inducing techno music all while contorting my body in a way that was on par with The Conjuring.

I am not a religious person, but in my first class, I just about became one. At every interval of exercises, I saw the light several times and even hoped it would claim me so that I could be done with the fire hydrant kicks that I was doing so wrong that they were more like light-dribble-from-a-sprinkler kicks. I fancy myself an athlete; I have played competitive soccer for several years and have the utmost confidence

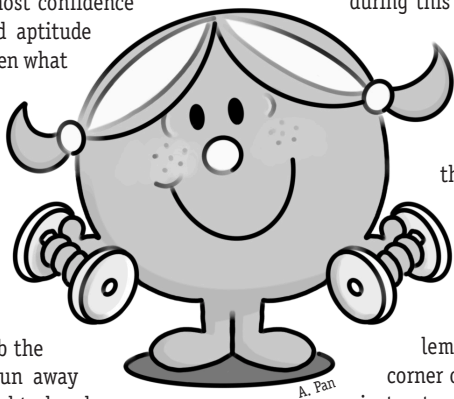
in my physical abilities and aptitude for exercise. I wish I knew then what I know now. Now, every time I walk into a class, I make eye contact with the eight-pound weights and stand tall and proud to show them I am neither afraid nor intimidated by their presence, like you do with a mountain lion or any other wild beast. Then I grab the three-pound weights and run away while the eight-pound weights laugh at me behind my back.

The class itself features a series of exercises followed by a period of stretching and relaxation. It begins with a Vinyasa, a flow that connects a multitude of stretches, and let me tell you this

segment puts the YAS in Vinyasa. To me, Vinyasa is akin to that one really reliable friend who remembers your birthday and obscure allergies; it's just the best. However, Vinyasa is like the church of Scientology; it lures you in with the promise of something fantastic, but there are much darker things ahead. The exercises themselves are not difficult in nature, but the repetition of them in a 90-degree room while Espresso (EDM version) is blasting at me from all angles makes me want to tell Sabrina Carpenter to try decaf coffee for a change and storm out of the room with my sweat towel and hot pink Stanley in hand.

The class concludes with a Shavasana, a segment of stretching and relaxation. It is my belief that they should hand out Mylar blankets during this time, as by this point, I am in shock and in need of a tangible reminder that I am still alive and have full-body mobility. At the end of the class, every ounce of my dignity and humanity has been stripped from me, and I am left, sweat-soaked, cowering in my Lululemon workout set in the corner of the studio begging the instructor not to make me do any more happy baby poses (I did five more after this). Yet, just like a toxic ex or go-to Starbucks drink, I always come back for more. Every week I attend hot pilates, and every week a little piece of me gets stronger, healthier, and happier?!

LITTLE MISS HOT PILATES



Pan ranks benefits of memory loss

by Annabelle Pan
Graphics Editor

Do you frequently forget where you leave your phone throughout the day? Has the homework assignment that you put in your bag the night before somehow ended up in a completely different folder? Do you ever recall that it's someone's birthday, but you can't remember who? These are a few of the many signs that indicate you may unknowingly be in the Bad Short-Term Memory Club. Although your condition is not as extreme as Dory's from Finding Nemo, it still hinders your day-to-day life. But, like everything else, short-term memory loss (STML) comes with some benefits.

Long-Term Memory: It's fairly common for people with short-term memory loss to have a normal and even superior long-term memory. So, although you might not remember something from two minutes ago, at least you can remember your random dream from first grade. You win some, you lose some.

Forget the Bad: If you forget 50 percent of the events that happened in the past few days, you're more likely to forget the bad stuff and remember the good... unless you're a pessimist and you only remember everything bad that's ever happened, in which case you should probably see a therapist.

Blast from the Past: Do you ever buy something online and, during the days it takes for the company to deliver it, just suddenly forget what you bought? You know you ordered something, but you can't remember what it

was. You could check the website to see the package details, but what's the fun in that? Instead, when it arrives, you can open it like it was a gift that your past self sent to you. Who knows, it might surprise you. Just don't forget why you needed it.

Rewatchability: With a bad short-term memory, it's easy to forget the plot, themes, and even the characters of a recently-watched movie, but you still know, deep in your bones, whether or not that movie was good or bad. If it was good, you can rewatch it and experience it all over again! You can watch it two, three, maybe even four times, before you start remembering the character names, major plot points, and surprising plot twists.

Constant Déjà Vu: Do you ever get the feeling that someone has said something similar in the past? You can almost remember who it was and what they said, but it escapes you every time. Do you get the feeling that you've met someone before but can't remember who they are? It's okay, because now you have the chance to meet them again. Even if your first impression of them wasn't great, you probably can't remember it, so you will have a fresh start.

Jokes: If a friend makes a really funny comment, you'll laugh about it in the moment, but as a member of the Bad Short-Term Memory Club, you'll probably forget it in a few minutes. However, this is actually a perk because others can make the same joke multiple times, and it will be equally funny. Having STML makes the recurring jokes even better.



STRAHS DESCRIBES THE STUPIDITY OF CYBERTRUCKS

by Hayley Strahs
News Editor

A specter is haunting Los Gatos — the spectre of Cybertrucks. Whether you're hightailing it on the highway or strolling in the heart of the suburbs, Tesla's metal minions have taken over our town. If our local auto scene continues down this strangely squarish path, Los Gatos's vast arsenal of normal, painted cars will transform into these doomsday vans.

In order to stop the spread of this mechanical disease, we must act with both haste and resourcefulness. As the self-proclaimed Supreme Leader of the Anti-Cybertruck League, I hereby mandate all Cybertruck owners to paint or wrap their cars. Anyone who fails to follow this executive order will receive a charge of public vehicular indecency, punishable by a life sentence of driving a gas-guzzling Kia Soul.

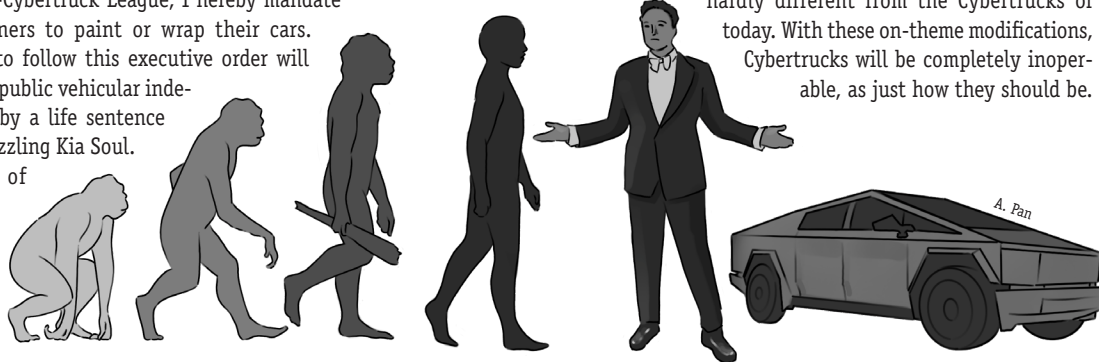
With the threat of operating the only car uglier than a Cybertruck looming over Tesla glazers' heads, we will be

one step closer to restoring our town's roads to their original glory. Gone will be the days of naked, paintless cars, and Los Gatos will finally return to automotive peace.

Alas, it will take more than simply decorations to address this urgent matter, for no amount of color can distract from the cars' cumbersome figure. Cybertrucks are devoid of any curves whatsoever and look straight out of a LEGO Duplo set. But why stop with the car's exterior? Cybertrucks should go the full nine yards: square tires, square steering wheels, square seats, you name it! The end result will be a Minecraft car with zero functionality whatsoever—hardly different from the Cybertrucks of today. With these on-theme modifications, Cybertrucks will be completely inoperable, as just how they should be.

Unfortunately, if we dispose of all the Cybertrucks in Los Gatos, there would be a plethora of Elon glazers mindlessly crowding our precious sidewalks. In the absence of cars, residents would have to resort to desperate measures like taking public transportation and/or riding bicycles: truly devastating possibilities. However, I urge citizens to put away their neglected Clipper cards and road bikes, for I have procured a glamorous, flamboyant solution to our problem.

In addition to my role within the Anti-Cybertruck League, I am also the unofficial Mayor of Los Gatos, and as such, I would like to announce the first annual Monster Cybertruck Show. Held at the former nudist colony for sale in the mountains, this spectacle will be nothing short of magnificent - or as I like to say, Musk-nificent. Get ready for some Musk-y armpits too, as some of the nudists are still squatting on the property. Racers will perform unique maneuvers that scare most drivers, just like Cybertruck owners already do on Highway 17 every morning. Instead of ramps, Cybertruck shows will utilize the slanted tops of the vehicles as their stage. Monster trucks are useful in rough terrain, while Cybertrucks have little practical benefit, so why not relegate these overgrown Hot Wheels prototypes to the only activity they might actually thrive in? Seven-year-old boys from across the Bay Area will flock to these underwhelmingly dull car extravaganzas, and maybe then will these metallic insults to the auto world see an ounce of respect from the outside world.



Koshalieva provides crucial prom date advice

by Aliya Koshalieva
Media Production Editor

As the school year ends, one of the most anticipated events in a teenager's life dawns on the horizon: prom. A night full of dancing, mingling, and even...romance. All those hours shopping for a dress that makes you look like a goddess are about to go down the drain if you can't find a date, and don't even think about picking from your bummy roster! Fret not and wipe your tears away because this guide will get you a date by the end of the month.

Create a roster: It's time to whip out Instagram and start scouting for a potential victim — I mean, a potential prom date! You want to go through everyone you follow, everyone your friends follow, and everyone who follows your school's official account. Write down the top ten and start plotting.

Cyberstalk: One of the wonders of the modern world is that everything is online, so use this to your advantage. Find out everything about them using their TikTok reposts and even their

mom's Facebook. The more you know about them, the more topics you have for a potential conversation.

Befriend prospects: Find a way to become friends with these potential dates, whether online or in person. If you're shy, just DM them. You could either start a conversation randomly or just send them an Instagram reel that you think they'd find

funny based on the content they've interacted with online. If you're feeling brave, accidentally bump into them in the halls and just start talking to them. They'll think it's a fated meet-cute, but you'll know it's just because you stalked their class schedule.

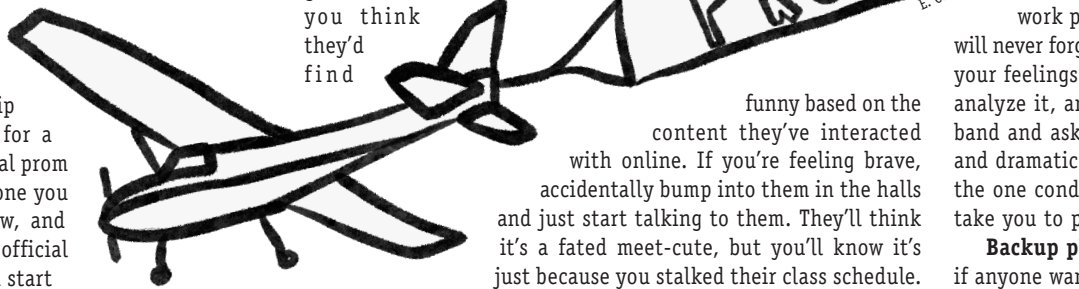
Discuss prom repeatedly: Since you've befriended your potential prom dates, you now have to subtly integrate prom into your conversations. Every time they say something, find a way to veer the discussion into the prom lane. Talk about what

you're going to wear. Sigh dramatically and say that you don't have a date. Talk about how you would do anything for a partner. Wink wink. If you run out of ways to keep it subtle, just burst into tears and cry about how lonely you're going to be at prom, and if they don't immediately run away, it means that they get the hint.

Make a move: Now, it's time to see your hard work pay off. You want to make a prom proposal that they will never forget. You want to write out a love letter, gushing about your feelings for them, and force your teacher to make the class analyze it, and when the class is finished, you jump out with a band and ask them to prom. Or, if you prefer a more chivalrous and dramatic proposal, go missing for a couple of days and have the one condition in the ransom note be that your crush has to take you to prom, a heartwarming story for the grandkids.

Backup plan: If all else fails, post on social media and write if anyone wants to be your prom date. If no one responds, it was probably a glitch, and you should DM every person individually, asking them to prom.

With these methods, you're sure to find someone to go with. Now, dance the night away with your date!



Littfin ranks conspiracies

by Kat Littfin
News Editor

We all have stumbled upon a conspiracy theory at one point in our lives. From decades-long conspiracy theories to absurd shower thoughts spewed by an underground Instagram Reels creator, a conspiracy theory is not hard to find in the vast sea of information (and misinformation) we call the internet. As someone who loves to spend quality time online and therefore is constantly bombarded with people's preposterous postulations, here is my ranking of the craziest conspiracy theories from least to most believable.

John F Kennedy assassination: The idea that Lee Harvey Oswald, the man who was arrested for killing JFK, was not Kennedy's true assassin is not a niche or recent conspiracy. In fact, generations of individuals have questioned the validity of the arrest, especially due to footage that makes it seem as though the killing gunshots were not fired from the direction that Oswald was stationed. Although I buy into this conspiracy theory, it needs to be retired. People talk about it too often, and I cringe at even giving it a platform in this article.

Birds aren't real: I don't think that this is a real conspiracy theory, but it is something that many TikTokers were convinced of, especially during the pandemic. This thought was likely just the product of boredom and surface-level idea, but it's definitely something worth watching several TikToks about. I mean, come on, who doesn't love to think that birds are cameras made by the government to watch our every move? I may not genuinely buy into this theory, but it is fun to entertain.

Helen Keller is a fraud: Calling this statement a theory would be an understatement; among many on social media, it has become a movement. On any educational video featuring Helen Keller, you are likely to encounter a barrage of comments spanning from plain denial to limitless bullying. Although

I am intrigued by how easy it is for people to build a community on the denial of the existence of a prominent historical figure, I don't like to entertain this theory because, for a short time in elementary school, when I did a project on her, Helen Keller was my icon.

Flat-earth: I had to mention this theory because I think it is the most absurd of them all. The kicker of this theory is how genuinely convinced and self-righteous proponents of this belief are. I mean, I guess it would be cool if the Earth were flat because then I wouldn't have to study hours for my AP Physics test over the next month, because then Newton's Laws would likely be false, but unfortunately, that is not the reality.

There are plenty more conspiracy theories and niche internet thoughts that I could write about, but at the end of the day, as long as social media is running, you can find your new favorite with the click of a button.



Singhal analyzes Hall's routine

by Siyona Singhal
News Editor

I am sure that by now, you've seen the iconic morning routine of TikTok and Instagram Reel superstar Ashton Hall. He seems to have his life perfectly planned out, down to the minute, which made me wonder: how can I become just like Ashton Hall? I immediately started my research and broke down Hall's morning routine into the necessary steps.

First, you must wake up from 3:50-3:59 AM. Any earlier or later will mess up the flow of your routine. Remember, your morning is planned precisely to the minute to ensure optimal results. The best way to wake yourself up is by dunking your head in a bowl of ice water, but not just any water; it must be Saratoga name-brand water. If you want to be like Hall, you have to leave behind your tap water life and commit fully to the sparkling, emerald blue Saratoga bottles of water. After completing your basic morning tasks like brushing your teeth and doing your business, walk onto your balcony and do pushups for exactly three minutes. When the three minutes are over, stand or squat and meditate for a mere 18 minutes more. When this is completed, walk back inside your home and journal for exactly three minutes only. Then grab your Saratoga water and sip on it while watching some videos on your phone.

Now it's time to really get the day started. Go to your closet and have your unidentified assistant

hand you your athletic clothing. Pack your bag and head to the gym. Here is where Hall thrives, running at top speeds on the treadmill. I recommend watching the multitude of workout routines and tips Hall has posted on his account so you can immerse yourself in the Hall gym experience. Alternatively, you can go for a swim in a pool. If you choose this option, you must make sure that as you jump into the water, you remain in the air for four minutes. This is non-negotiable and will require you to learn how to temporarily hover. However, if you are truly dedicated to becoming like Hall, you will have to overcome these obstacles. Once your workout and swim is over, head back home, shower, and have your servants — oops, I mean assistants — help you get dressed. Your outfit should consist of shorts, running shoes, and a cropped running vest. This outfit is one of Hall's favorites and allows him to reach peak performance.

Once dressed, eat a hearty and balanced meal before leaving your home. Your main activity of the day will be running alongside cars and filming yourself sprinting as fast as possible. Make sure to use a high-quality camera so your viewers can see every morsel of sweat dripping down your chest. When you eventually get thirsty from all the physical activity you have been doing, drink from a crisp, ice-cold bottle of Saratoga water to quench that thirst. When that's over, hop on Zoom and meet with some of your 10,000 clients who want to learn how to be like you.

This will complete the perfect morning routine that is sure to fix all your problems. If you follow every step, you are guaranteed to climb up the ranks and gain respect from everyone around you. While you may never have more aura than Ashton Hall himself, you can come pretty close.



Mitchell discusses the significance of a bad haircut

by Kayla Mitchell
Media Production Editor

Every teenager has their own way of dealing with anxiety. Most take the sensible route — talking to friends, picking up a new hobby, or finding a distraction. Then there's me, who somehow decided that a drastic and devastating haircut at the beginning of each school year was the key to my fresh start. I'll admit, I should probably book a therapy session to end this strange cycle, but hey, some lessons you have to learn the hard way!

My sad cycle began freshman year when I decided to change it up and go blonde. To put it simply, I really thought I was rocking this look. I told all my friends that the new highlights I had achieved were actually a result of the summer sun (Mother Nature, you owe me one). Unfortunately, my dark brown eyebrows and eyes were not in on the lie: they completely betrayed me. I contemplated driving to Target to buy a box of blonde dye and fully commit to my transformation, but luckily, I didn't have my license.

Sophomore year was, without a doubt, the most disastrous transformation of them all. On top of still clinging to my wannabe blonde phase, I also found myself facing what



I thought was early-onset hair loss — at the shockingly ancient age of fourteen. It all started when my hairdresser and mother, both of whom must have been going through something, decided that pairing a bob with curtain bangs on my aggressively curly hair was the way to go. That night, as I tried to tie up my newly shorn hair, I suddenly felt a strange lump on my back. Panic set in — was I actually going bald? At fourteen?! Don't panic, everyone. Turns out, the "lump" was just my sad, shortened strands grieving the ghost of their fallen com-

rades. The next morning, very upset with my new look, I turned to my older brother for a reassuring pep talk. Now, my brother has never been great at heartfelt speeches, but that day? Oh, he found his voice. After examining me for several silent minutes, he, with the emotional depth of a brick wall, declared, "Girls with short hair are not pretty." My. Own. Brother! After obliterating any ounce of confidence I had left, he spun on his slippery heel and strutted away — fiercely flipping his own hair.

As a junior this year, I am proud to say that I have mostly kept it safe. For a while, I believed that I had finally outgrown my self-destructive years, but this past summer, I discovered the full potential of a straightening iron. If you have ever watched an episode of the educational, life-changing show *Dance Moms*, you'll know Abby Lee Miller's iconic tendency to describe things as "straight as Elton John." That was exactly how I would've described my hair that summer — pin-straight perfection... or so I thought. While I was preoccupied frying the front strands of my hair to oblivion, the hair on the back of my head was staging a full-blown rebellion. Ever wonder who started the trend of girls warning each other to straighten the parts they can't see? It was definitely me. At least I've left some form of a legacy.

These days, my hair and I have a relationship that I can best describe as "frenemies." You know the saying: keep your friends close but your enemies closer.

Gigi Gonzalez excels in all creative aspects of life

by Sam Gruetter and Kayla Mitchell
Opinion and Media Production Editors

Since moving to Los Gatos, junior **Gigi Gonzalez** has earned an impressive amount of accolades and extracurriculars. From excelling in competitive soccer to earning lead roles in the school's musicals, Gonzalez showcases an outstanding range of talents. As a key member of the Los Gatos music community, Gonzalez actively shares her passion for music with her peers, enhancing the school's artistic community and inspiring those around her.

Gonzalez has taken voice lessons since she was a young girl and decided to channel her passion for music into musical theater. Her musical theater journey began in fifth grade after watching her school's production of *Finding Nemo*, which inspired her to take to the stage herself. The following year, Gonzalez landed her first role as the earthworm in the musical *James and the Giant Peach*.

In her most recent musical theater achievement, Gonzalez played the lead role of Sophie in the school's production of *Mamma Mia*. Gonzalez was thrilled about her part in the production, saying, "I

was very excited to play Sophie because it is one of my dream roles, especially because *Mamma Mia* is such an influential musical." One contributing factor of any successful production is the chemistry of the cast, and Gonzalez testified that *Mamma Mia* had just that.

Describing the tight-knit cast, Gonzalez stated, "There were a lot of underclassmen in the production which gave the upperclassman a chance to help out and talk with them. I think that brought the cast together really well and it was definitely one of my favorite casts to work with." While Gonzalez has already achieved one of her dream roles in *Sophie*, she still hopes to land the parts of Lydia in a production of *Beetlejuice* or Velma Kelly in the production of *Chicago*.

On top of her participation in groups at Los Gatos, Gonzalez has a variety of interests and hobbies outside of school. Over the years, Gonzalez has learned how to play multiple instruments, including guitar, piano, drums, and bass guitar. She also enjoys writing poetry, which enhances her songwriting skills and fuels her aspiration to create more of her own music in the future. Gonzalez says her favorite genre of music is pop; she especially loves the music of

artists Tyler the Creator and SZA. Though many of her hobbies involve the arts, Gonzalez does not limit herself to the realm of the aesthetic, participating in a high-level competitive soccer team with Surf Bay Area.

Taking on such a wide variety of passions and doing them so well is no small feat. Performing on the stage or playing on the field, Gonzalez demonstrates her impressive aptitude in both the arts and athletics, skills that will be sure to take her far in life.



Fawcett masters musical theater Shaham brings music to life

by Hayley Strahs and Megan Hastings
News Editor and Public Relations Manager

Whether she's quietly turning the pages of a book or performing on stage in a cheerful, upbeat musical, freshman **Cecelia Fawcett** works with passion, imagination, and curiosity.

Her favorite subject is English, which should come as no surprise to anyone who knows her. "English is something I've always liked.

"It's a lot of fun," she said. "It really helps that I have a lot of friends in my class." Fawcett says she is particularly thankful

to be at a high school where she can focus more on reading and writing after attending a school where English wasn't given much of a priority. A recent favorite of hers? *Lessons in Chemistry*: "This book is excellent.

There are many excellent themes, and I truly like the writing style."

She has a long history in theater, having performed since second grade. "My mom signed me up for community theater after I loved the little kindergarten play I started with," she explained.

She has since appeared in more than twenty productions this past year, including *Mamma Mia* and *Puffs!* She was surprised to receive the Legacy Robe Award this year, a robe that commemorates a cast or crew member for their exceptional work on and behind the stage, but she was immensely appreciative. "I felt really excited because everyone was so excited for me," she recalled.

Next to theater, music is a major part of her life. "I've only been playing the guitar for a few months," she said. "I had wanted to learn for a

long time and got a guitar for Christmas." She also listens when she's not playing. "Music is something I adore...It plays a significant role in my life," she pointed out. Fawcett has been interested in Phoebe Bridgers lately and is eagerly awaiting music from indie artist Ethel Cain.

From shining on stage to engaging in class discussions, Fawcett radiates positivity and kindness towards those around her. In general, her maxim is to "be nice to everybody all the time," a simple yet powerful concept that guides all of Fawcett's actions.

One key way that Fawcett brings joy to others is through compliments. She explained, "Everyone always gets so happy when they get complimented. I just know compliments are the best thing you can do for a person."

With three years to go, Fawcett has sizable plans for her future at LGHS. In regards to academics, she expressed, "Los Gatos has such a big variety of electives you can take, and I just want to take all of them, but I know I can't." Nonetheless, Fawcett plans to take seven classes during her sophomore year, including *International Cuisine* one and *Guitar* one, in order to fulfill her aspiration of taking as many electives as possible. Outside of the classroom, Fawcett is also a member of Drama Club, SEEDS Club, and Key Club, all of which she plans to continue with throughout the rest of her high school career.

From performing in theater productions to taking advantage of many course and club offerings, Fawcett is truly enjoying her time at LG.

by Claudia Casal
Culture Editor

Competing in debate, singing in choir, playing bass guitar, and acting in musicals: **Guy Shaham** is making the most of his sophomore year.

Academically, Shaham finds English 10 Honors is his favorite class, citing his love for storytelling and lively class discussions. He spoke about several of the books he read in the course, including *Fight Club* and *The Things They Carried*. "I started to notice the little things, like how the dialogue is formatted differently depending on who is speaking. That kind of attention to detail is what makes it so cool," said Shaham about *Fight Club* more specifically.

Outside of the classroom, music and theater are where Shaham has found creative outlets. His recent experience in the school's spring musical *Mamma Mia* was the highlight of his year.

"We all got super close," he shared about the theater community, "It's really like a second family." Shaham performed as one of the main character's potential dads, Bill Anderson, and especially enjoyed being a part of the number *Take a Chance on Me*. While rehearsals took several months, Shaham enjoyed the leadership roles he and other students had in the musical's production. He has participated in theater since seventh grade, first performing in Fisher Middle School's production of *The Lion King* as the hornbill bird Zazu.

Shaham has also been a member in choir since freshman year, particularly enjoying the strong community. As a tenor, Shaham said, "My favorite part of choir is when we split up into sectionals, where we split into our vocal groups. It's really fun. I get

to hang out and sing with a lot of my friends." Out of all of his recital experiences, his stand-out song was a Malay folk song called *Rasa Sayang*.

An amateur bass guitarist, Shaham picked up the instrument last summer. "I just decided I wanted to play, so I bought a bass, and looked up some videos, took a couple of lessons, and learned to play through that." Shaham has already found success in his new passion, playing in LGHS's most recent talent show, and plans to expand his skills. Though he doesn't have a dream song to learn, Shaham finds he is motivated by hearing bass lines that catch his attention: "If I hear a bass line I like, I'll figure out how to learn it."

Shaham is also hoping to expand his career in high school debate. While only participating in one tournament, he looks forward to dedicating more time to this activity in the coming months.

He participates in Parliamentary Debate for the school's team, an event that involves preparing for a debate with only 20 minutes of research beforehand.

Looking ahead, Shaham plans to focus next year on the daunting task of preparing for college. He hopes to go into law, and his dream school is UC Berkeley because of its great reputation and proximity to home. With such a wide range of talents and interests, Shaham is ready to take on anything. Whether he is analyzing literature, performing on stage, or crafting arguments in debates, Shaham gives it his all. As he puts it, "Try your best at everything you do. If you don't, you won't end up where you want to be. Give it 100 percent."



Ellery Han reaches new heights in robotics and rock climbing

by Siyona Singhal
News Editor

Whether he's climbing rocks or making robots, senior **Ellery Han** puts his passion into everything he does.

Currently, Han is taking many advanced classes, including AP Calculus AB, Honors Economics and AP US Government, AP Biology, AP Physics C, AP Literature and Composition, and lastly, Robotics. Han stated, "Other than Robotics, my favorite classes would have to be AP Bio, just because I enjoy it the most out of my other classes, and Honors Economics. I like Economics because it's a fun class and we don't do much, but the things we do are actually interesting."

Most of Han's free time is dedicated to robotics, where he holds the title of shop manager. Han explained: "Being shop manager means that I'm in charge of organizing our materials and tools. Besides that, I also co-lead assembly with [junior **Anthony Zhang**] and am part of the machining sub-team." Reflecting on the 2025 competition season, Han said, "My favorite moment this season has been playing card games in the pit because it's the first time we've had free time during the competition since the robot was actually working for once." Han continued on, explaining that his favorite aspect of robotics is "the people, since my teammates are really great and being at competitions with them is really fun. Also, it's really fulfilling to see your robot actually work and know that you have worked so hard for it."

Han also enjoys rock climbing. He goes to an indoor climbing gym called Movement Santa Clara. Han began climbing in November of 2024 because, as he explained, "I was looking for something to do, and I stumbled upon climbing because there is this guy on YouTube who's a really good climber; his name is Magnus Midtbø. His videos were really interesting and I thought that it might be a really interesting thing to pursue, so I asked [senior **Henry Lee**], who was also climbing at the time, and we met up and went climbing." Han's goal by the end of the year is to climb V10. He elaborated, "In rock climbing there are different grades. It goes from V into all the way up to the current hardest outdoor boulder, which is V17. So V10 is kind of the breaking point for being really good at climbing." Han's favorite part of climbing is spending time with his friends and seeing his progress. He remarked, "Climbing is different than other

sports in the sense that you can see clear progress because you go up the different grades, which I think is one thing that gets people hooked to climbing."

With a strong academic record, a leadership role in robotics, and an ambitious climbing goal on the horizon, Han exemplifies what it means to fully commit to one's passions. His journey reflects a balance of hard work, curiosity, and a genuine love for the communities he's a part of, proving that success is not just about achievements, but the people and passions that fuel them.



- Ovechkin breaks NHL points record
- LG cheer finishes season at nationals

SPORTS

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Capitals star Ovechkin shatters Gretzky's 31-year-old record

Sahil Muthukrishnan
Sports Editor

On Apr. 6, Alex the "Great Eight" Ovechkin, the Russian superstar left wing of the Washington Capitals, cemented himself in history by breaking the all-time National Hockey League (NHL) record for goals. Wayne the "Great One" Gretzky, whom many fans consider the greatest hockey player of all time, famously held the record for years.

This is a momentous occasion for Ovechkin. The Great Eight previously tied Gretzky's record on Apr. 4, scoring his 894th goal against the Chicago Blackhawks in the third period as Gretzky watched from the stands. Fittingly, the goal was a power play, which Ovechkin is renowned for, having a record of 324 power-play goals and an NHL all-time record. Ovechkin secured his record-breaking 895th goal against the New York Islanders on another power play, this time in the second quarter, the 42nd goal of his 20th career season.

After scoring, Ovechkin dove, slid on the ice toward the center, and joyfully celebrated with his teammates while fans chanted "OVI, OVI." The Islanders and Capitals stopped their match for a ceremony to commemorate the moment. The league played a tribute video honoring Ovechkin's career and achievements, along with Gretzky and Gary

Bettman, the commissioner of the NHL, saluting the Capitals player. During the ceremony, Gretzky commented, "895's pretty special...They say records are made to be broken, but I'm not sure who's gonna score more goals than that." Gretzky fulfilled his promise by being the first person to shake Ovechkin's hand after the record, just as Gordie Howe did when Gretzky broke Howe's record. Bettman commented, "Wayne, you'll always be the 'Great One' and you had a record that nobody ever thought would be broken, but Alex, you did it. You've been amazing."

Before Ovechkin, the goal record seemed an unbeatable achievement to many fans and players. It was one of those records, such as Wilt Chamberlain's 100-point game or Emmitt Smith's 18,355 career rushing yards, that seemed impossible to touch. Gretzky's record lasted for an unprecedented 31 years before Ovechkin surpassed him. On Mar. 23, 1994, Gretzky broke the goal record of Detroit Red Wings legend Gordie "Mr. Hockey" Howe. The number of games he played makes Ovechkin's record even more impressive. Gretzky achieved his record through the 1,487 regular-season games in his career, while Ovechkin secured the record just one game earlier, tying the record in 1,486 games and breaking the record in 1,487, making him definitively the greatest scorer in hockey history.

Ovechkin is an unprecedented hockey player. While Gretzky is still the Great One, the Great Eight's recent achievement is not one to scoff at, and he may now have a case for being the greatest hockey player of all time. However, with Gretzky still holding onto the record for most assists, it is hard to think he will yield that title anytime soon. (Sources: CBS, ESPN, NHL, Yahoo Sports)



GREAT EIGHT: DC Capitals star Alex Ovechkin skates up the ice to attempt shot.

Giants start season with hope

Megan Saul
Culture Editor

The 2025 Major League Baseball (MLB) season commenced on Mar. 18 and 19, with the Los Angeles Dodgers and Chicago Cubs playing their first games in Japan for the Tokyo Series. The majority of the team's seasons started on Mar. 27. These games followed the MLB spring training, which started on Feb. 20.

Although the majority of the rules from the prior season will continue into the upcoming one, including the controversial pitch clock that the MLB implemented during the 2023 season, the league made a few changes. The two new rules create a stricter shift violation and close players' ability to run through second base, creating a loophole. While neither rule is major, they will make the game fairer for both teams.

Last year, the Dodgers took home the Commissioner's Trophy following their win against the New York Yankees in the World Series. Fans and critics expect the Dodgers to go back-to-back.



PLAY BALL: Oracle Park has been the Giants home since 2000.

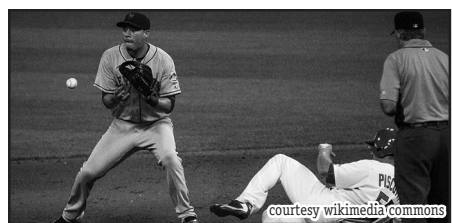
Closer to home is, of course, the San Francisco Giants. They started this season off with a bang. Their first game was against the Cincinnati Reds on Mar. 27. Thanks to Giants first baseman Wilmer Flores's three-run homer in the final inning, they won with a score of 6-4. Last year, the Giants finished with a record of 80-82. With this, they came in fourth place in the National League but did not make the playoffs. Despite their relatively unsuccessful previous season, the team showed great

improvement during the off and spring season and is expected to have a more successful season this year. They also have new additions to the team with Giants' picks in the 2024 MLB draft. Although none of them have made their MLB debut and are currently playing for the Minor League, they are expected to have an important role in the future of the Giants. So far, the Giants have competed in series against the Philadelphia Phillies, New York Yankees, Cincinnati Reds, Seattle Mariners, and Houston Astros. They have a record of 12-4 and are currently in second place in the NL West. Some of the standout players from this season so far include infielder Wilmer Flores, outfielder Jung Hoo Lee, and catcher Patrick Bailey.

The addition of Buster Posey to the Giants' management marks another change this season. Posey, a former pitcher for the Giants, recently took a role in the business side of the Giants as the President of Baseball Operations. Posey is hoping to help the Giants win another World Series by improving the team culture and player environment. Referring to his new job, Posey said, "It's also kind of fun, too. We'll see in a year if it's fun or not."

The MLB season will run until Sept. 28, when the playoffs start. Although the date isn't set yet, the World Series is expected to occur on Oct. 25. The Giants' next home game is on Apr. 25 against the Texas Rangers. Tune in to see how their season plays out!

(Sources: AP, ESPN, MLB, Sports Illustrated)

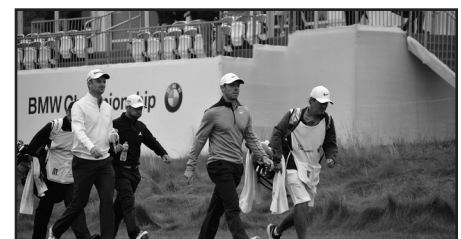


SAFE: SF Giants infielder Flores tries to get a runner out.

McIlroy secures Grand Slam

Owen Fugit
Editor-in-Chief

On Apr. 13, Northern Ireland's Rory McIlroy became the first male golfer in the past 25 years to complete a career Grand Slam and one of only six male golfers since 1935 to complete this feat. A career Grand Slam occurs when a golfer wins all four majors: The Masters, the PGA Championship, the US Open, and the Open Championship. McIlroy won the 2011 US Open, the PGA Championship in both 2012 and 2014, and secured the 2014 Open Championship.



PAR FOR THE COURSE: McIlroy walks the course for a shot.

McIlroy began golfing at a young age and took to the sport quickly, competing throughout his childhood. At the 2007 European Amateur Men's Team Championship, McIlroy, alongside teammates representing Ireland, won the first of many championships in his career. McIlroy has won 29 championships, including 11 internationally, across a total of 263 played events. He has placed in the top five 83 times and won the PGA Tour's FedEx Cup three times: in 2016, 2019, and 2022.

At the 2025 Masters, McIlroy beat England's Justin Rose in a sudden-death playoff round to determine a winner. McIlroy narrowly won by one stroke against Rose, earning him the coveted green jacket presented to winners of The Masters.

In interviews with the press, McIlroy explained, "It feels like it's been a long time coming, you know, I've been coming here for 17 years...I had my first real chance at winning this 14 years ago,

but it didn't quite happen that day, and then for the last 10 years coming here and trying to complete the Grand Slam...there's been a lot riding on this week for obvious reasons...but thankfully, finally, I was able to get over the line."

McIlroy began the first round of The Masters at par but brought his scores down for the remainder of the competition. In round two, he posted a 66, followed subsequently by a 66 in round three. In round four, McIlroy posted a bogey on the 18th hole, sending him into a sudden-death playoff round against Rose. Had it not been for a missed putt on the final hole, McIlroy would have won the tournament early. McIlroy's total from all four rounds of play came out to a -11, a strong score at a famous course such as Augusta National.

With a career Grand Slam finally secured for McIlroy, several fans are already speculating who the next golfer to win this achievement will be, with several estimates suggesting Jordan Spieth or even Xander Schauffele as the next best contender for the title. Spieth will have a shot to complete his own career Grand Slam at the PGA Championship on May 15. However, experts say that a career Grand Slam is unlikely for several more decades, and they suggest that it may be another 25 or even 50 years until someone completes this achievement. (Sources: BBC, ESPN, MGM, PGA)



BIRDIE: McIlroy attempts a tough putt-in to secure a par.

NBA season comes to a close as teams gear up for the playoffs

Rory Zeman
Media Production Editor

On Apr. 13, the NBA regular season came to a close with each team playing a game, resulting in major consequences and shifts in the standings. Here's a look at the current standings and expectations for the postseason.

In the Eastern Conference, the Cleveland Cavaliers finished at the top of the standings with an incredible record of 64 wins and 18 losses. The defending champions, the Boston Celtics, won 61 games and lost 21, closely following the Cavaliers. Celtics closely followed. Every other team that made the playoffs in the Eastern Conference was over ten games behind the Celtics, making these two teams the heavy favorites to win the conference in the playoffs and secure a spot in the finals.



THE ANOMALY: Celtics superstar Tatum dribbles around Cavs point guard Garland.

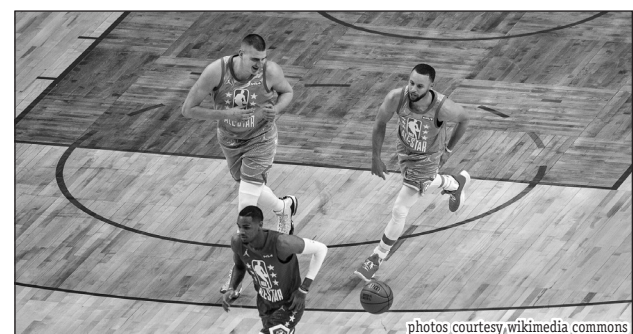
In the Western Conference, the standings were a lot more competitive. To start, the Oklahoma City Thunder won the West and retained the best record in the league with 68 wins and 14 losses. While the following teams remain significantly farther behind the Thunder, each of these teams has a solid case to win the conference in the playoffs. Many of them made major trades during the middle of the season to make a late-season push, justifying their distance from the first-seeded Thunder. The teams that best exemplify this trend are the third-seeded Los Angeles Lakers and the seventh-seeded Golden State Warriors, which both acquired superstars during the trade deadline in February and have won the vast majority of their games since then.

As the playoffs kick off, the most anticipated first-round matchups in the East include the New York Knicks versus the Detroit Pistons and the Milwaukee Bucks versus the Indiana Pacers. The Knicks, after acquiring Karl Anthony Towns and Mikal Bridges in the offseason, are set on making a deep playoff run after a disappointing second-round exit last year. However, they are facing an ambitious Pistons team led by young star Cade Cunningham, as the team is having a turnaround season after setting the record last season for the most consecutive losses ever in NBA history. The Bucks, who have faint memories of a championship in 2021, have lost early in the playoffs ever since then and hope to make something out of this year after having superstar Giannis Antetokounmpo healthy and entering the playoffs for the first time in years.

In the West, fans expect extremely close games for the majority of the matchups, but there are a few standout series to keep an eye

out for. Firstly, a rematch between Luka Doncic, who is now a Laker, against the Minnesota Timberwolves, who faced off in the Western Finals last season, is set to take place in the first round. Additionally, the Los Angeles Clippers, who have had the best record in the league after getting Kawhi Leonard back from injury in early March, are set to face off against the Denver Nuggets, who won the championship two years ago and have three-time MVP Nikola Jokic putting on the best statistical season of his career.

Fans are eagerly anticipating what could be the best playoffs in decades, as both conferences have teams that could upset their way to a championship. (Sources: CNN, NBA)



HUSTLE: Nuggets center Jokic and Warriors guard Curry run back up the court.

Los Gatos Rowing Club showcases talent at top regatta

by **Julia Valencia**
People Editor

As Los Gatos Rowing Club (LGRC) enters its spring season, both the women's and men's teams are pushing their limits. After a successful but somewhat uneventful fall season, LGRC athletes and coaches have entered their spring sprint season with two words in mind: eager and hungry.

During the fall season, select LGRC athletes attended the Head of the Charles Regatta in Cambridge, Massachusetts, a 5,000-meter race that draws record crowds each year. The men's youth coxed quad placed fourth out of 50, and the men's youth four, coxed by sophomore **Kai Yoo**, placed fifth out of 90. The women's youth eight placed 34th out of 90, and the women's youth quad, coxed by senior **Kyra Cherlopalle**, received first place with fellow seniors **Harri Cheetham** and **Emme Adams** and junior **Jenna Yoder**.



VICTORY IS NEAR: The men's double sets soaring standards after placing highly.

After the end of a fruitful fall season, LGRC junior athletes attacked their first big race of the spring: the prestigious San Diego Crew Classic (SDCC) regatta. SDCC attracts over 4,000 of the top junior rowers in the nation. Over time, LGRC has developed a name for itself at the regatta. This year, LGRC sent over 70 rowers to the event. In past competition years, LGRC has left a lasting impact but nothing close to the near clean sweep they achieved this year across all age categories. LGRC brought home five first-place trophies and numerous podium places over the two-day regatta.

The women's team took home first place in the Women's Youth Quad, Women's Youth B Quad, and Women's Under-16 Quad. The Women's Youth Quad broke a long-standing winning streak set by Redwood Scullers in the event, while the Women's Youth B Quad sustained their now three-year winning streak in the race. The Women's Under-16 Quad also set one of the fastest national times ever recorded in their respective category with the help of freshmen **Chloe Stopford** and **Maya Logan**. The men's team defended their titles in both the Men's Youth Quad with junior **Nolan Hamm** and the Men's Youth B Quad with juniors **Cameron DeGraff** and **Jasper Powell**. Row2k, a popular photography and journalism group that focuses on all things rowing, mentioned LGRC in one of their articles, noting, "The 'Cats' Own the Quads."

Because of their big wins at SDCC, LGRC now has a large target painted on their back. They are training harder than ever for the upcoming Southwest Regionals, their Youth Nationals qualifying

regatta. Both the men's and women's teams are planning on entering a variety of boats to show their mastery of the sport and to try to qualify as many boats to Youth Nationals in Florida during mid-June as possible. Head Coach **Jaime Velez** stated that the athletes need to "stay humble and stay hungry" as they approach their final stretch of this successful spring season.

(Sources: Row2k, San Diego Crew Classic)



DUAL MEET: The women's quad skulls to finish the race with immense speed.

LG boys' lacrosse triumphs

by **Atharava Pandey**
National/World Editor

The Los Gatos Varsity Boys' Lacrosse Team has continued to thrive through its opponents as the season has progressed. The team currently has a 7-7 overall record and an impressive 4-1 league record. The team has really turned things around and looks set to defend their CCS title. According to junior midfielder **Cooper Ito**, "Our team was off to a rocky start, but we have been on a win streak and recently beat our rivals, Bellarmine." On Apr. 4, the Wildcats achieved a memorable win against Bellarmine College Preparatory with a score of 10-9 in overtime. The team has won its last three games and will surely maintain this momentum. As for the rest of the season, Ito said, "The mindset is to have fun, but play like it's our last game every time. The team's goals are to end with a winning record and win the CCS title." Today Apr. 25, the varsity boys play at Carmel High School.

The varsity girls are continuously building on past games and improving every day. The team currently has a 4-3 league record, achieving many significant wins. On Mar. 26, the team beat Mountain View High School with a score of 12-9, and on Mar. 28, dominated Wilcox High School 25-1. The team will play Mountain View High School next at Helm



IN ACTION: Boys' lacrosse team runs drills through practice.

Field on Apr. 23 and then play at Stevenson High School on Apr. 25.

The junior varsity boys still stand strong. The team currently has a 5-1 record, losing only one



PREPPED AND READY: The boys' team completes warm-up laps.

game to St. Francis High School on Apr. 15 by a score of 12-6. The Wildcats experienced many unforgettable wins this season. Sophomore and JV midfielder **Benjamin Burtis** reflected, "Our most memorable game for me would be at Bellarmine. That was a particularly very good game because it was the first time our JV team beat Bellarmine ever." The JV boys continue to play well and look forward to continuing their form. On the team's key to success, Burtis stated, "The team's chemistry has been perfect, especially with the new freshmen. I think we all get along pretty well and all work together." On Apr. 21, the junior varsity boys' competed against Salinas High School and then play at Carmel High School today, Apr. 25.

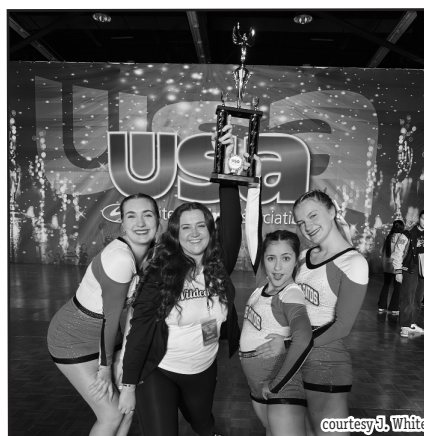
The junior varsity girls' play has continued to get better. The team suffered a close loss to Aragon High School on Mar. 28 by a score of 10-9. However, losses are an excellent way for the team to learn and fuel their competitive spirit.

LG Lacrosse is rapidly escalating to the peak of their seasons, and with all four teams starting to find form, it will be tough to beat any of them. Be sure to come out and support our lacrosse teams as they represent our school!

LGHS Cheer finishes season

by **Kat Littfin**
News Editor

As the school year nears its end, Los Gatos High School's competitive cheer team's season has also come to a close. The team competed in Nationals earlier this year and has begun working on next year's season, recruiting a new batch of athletes.



CHAMPIONS: LG cheer members pose with the trophy.

During the spring season, the cheerleaders shift their focus to competitions. The team competes at several local and state competitions before attending All-Star Cheer Nationals in Anaheim, California. The event took place from Feb. 13 to Feb. 17, inviting school and club cheer teams from around America to compete. LGHS's cheer squad competed in the Medium Group Novice category in the competition, facing 13 other teams. The cheerleaders' year-long hard work and practices paid off as they scored fifth in their category. Sophomore **Katelin Sroka**, who was a part of the competition team and the JV sideline team this year, described her feelings

leading up to the performance: "There were a lot of teams there so I was nervous that maybe we weren't good enough. But when I got on stage, my fears went away when the music started."

Although Nationals is a time for the cheerleaders to showcase their talent and spirit, the girls also view it as a great opportunity for team bonding. The team spent the weekend in Anaheim, staying in hotel rooms together and visiting Disneyland on their second-to-last day. Sroka said of her experience at Nationals: "It was super fun. I feel like I got a lot closer to some of the girls... at Disneyland, going on rides with different people each time was really cool." Junior **Alice McKee**, a member of both the varsity sideline cheer team and the competition team, added that a highlight of her time at Nationals was pranking some of her teammates in their rooms.

Even though the competition season is over, the girls continue to practice and host clinics and tryouts for next year's season. Since Mar. 31, the team has held optional weekly clinics on Tuesdays from 4:30 to 6:30 PM, and starting in May, they will host mandatory clinics for interested athletes. The team will hold tryouts starting Saturday, May 10. Students who want to showcase their spirit, get involved on campus, and improve their athletic abilities should consider trying out!

As the season nears its end, athletes have begun to reflect on their accomplishments and hopes for next year. Varsity sideline cheerleader and senior **Mia Rashkin** says that her last year doing cheer has been very fulfilling. Her time on the team taught her "time management and work ethic" because, as a student athlete with a full-time sport, there is always "so much to do." About last cheer season, Rashkin commented, "It was nice to have these last few moments with my [cheer] friends." She is excited to be finished with her senior season. Sroka also communicated her hopes for next season, stating that she's working to place higher at Nationals.

Boys' tennis wraps up spring season with final matches

by **Kayla Mitchell**
Media Production Editor

The Los Gatos Boys' Tennis Team is nearing the end of its season, with final matches in the next few weeks determining its placement and chances at CCS. The team has been extremely successful so far this year, earning a winning record and taking down almost all of its opponents in the division. Wins in the next few weeks are key for the top spot in the league rankings and a triumphant end to the spring tennis season.

After taking a week off to relax and regroup during the spring break, the boys' team is ready to take the court again. The team began



SERVICE: Beal remains composed before serving to his opponent on the court.

practice right away to prepare themselves for the intense number of upcoming matches. Because of weather-related match cancellations at the beginning of the season, the tennis team will have to compete in multiple extra matches throughout the next couple of weeks. Starting on the 23rd, the boys will play five matches in a row, only taking the weekend off to rest from the competition. Coach **Justin Stenger** shared the importance of the upcoming match results: "We have a big matchup against Cupertino coming up soon. They barely beat us last time 4-3 and a win against them would help us slide into the number one spot in the rankings." While the following competitions will be intense for the boys' team, they are determined to take down their top opponent.

A crucial aspect of every team is the camaraderie and connection among its players. Junior **Oliver Nigen**, who competes in the number four singles line, shares how the players work together and encourage each other during matches. Nigen said his favorite part of being on the team is the support and cheering during tense moments, recollecting: "There was the one match where we were all watching the last doubles line finish to determine who won. We all lined up on the sides and cheered, creating a great atmosphere on the courts." Number two singles player junior **Ethan Beal** has made impressive progress this season, rising in the ladder from his place in number one doubles last year. Beal shares that the team practices are great bonding experiences for the team: "One of the best moments for me was at the beginning of the year when we got to meet everyone at tryouts and practices. Everyone was really nice and supportive."

The players on the tennis team credit much of their success to the attentiveness of the coaches at matches and practices. Coach Stenger has led the boys' team for two years now and has made impressive

strides in the program. Nigen shares that Stenger is a considerate coach who pays attention to all of his players. He shared, "Stenger is really good at focusing on each of us individually. He understands that we all need to work on different things and creates an environment at practice where we all benefit." Coach Stenger is ready to lead the boys' team through the last few weeks of their season and earn the top spot in the league's bracket.



AT THE READY: Sophomore **Benjamin Hale** preps to return a pass in practice.



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LG Swim and Dive continues with spring season meets

by Katie Nelson and Nelson Kramer
Center and Humor Editors

The LGHS swim and dive teams are more than halfway through their season with a few exciting events on the horizon. Both teams are still working hard as their league finals and CCS inch closer. This year, there are numerous standout athletes on the swim and dive teams, and everyone is excited to see how far their efforts will take them in the last couple of competitions.

The dive team made significant progress this year with the addition of four new divers to the team. One of the team's newest divers is junior **Hayley Wong** who was phenomenal on the boards this season. She joined this year, searching for something to fill her spare time with, and found a true kinship with the sport. When asked about what she wished people knew about the sport, she said, "The [bar] for entry is super low!! All you need to know is how to not drown in the pool, so if you finished freshman year PE, you should be fine." Keep an eye out for this phenomenal diver; as the season comes to a close, she will be sure to excel.

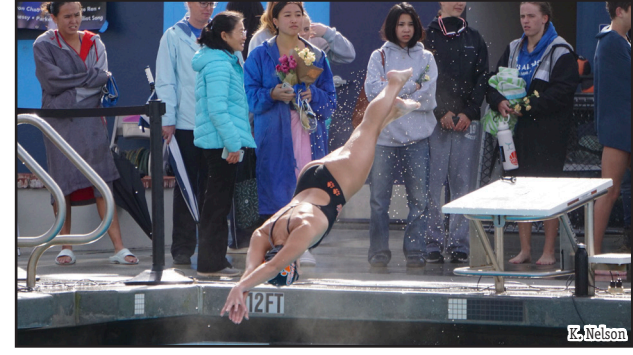
Sophomore **Adrián Vieyra** joined the dive team last year and has become a top competitor for JV. He originally joined the sport in a search for something new and fun that wouldn't break any bones. So far, his goals for the season include performing higher-scoring dives

and executing a double front flip. Vieyra wishes more people knew about the sport, so more people would join.

With only a few weeks left in the swim season, the team is gearing up for Leagues and then CCS. The girls' league trials are on Apr. 23; the boys' trials are on Apr. 24. Athletes swim against opposing schools, and their place in certain events determines if they go to the League Finals the following day. Following that, those who qualify with certain times advance to CCS, and then to States. Junior **Eddie Lasso** hopes to return to States this year and looks forward to competing in his favorite events: "The events I will swim at CCS and leagues are the 50 and 100 free... I like the fast-paced thrill of these events and also hope to swim in the States after swimming fast at CCS."

Despite the pressure and stress that come with fierce competition in the coming weeks, swimmers appreciate the strong camaraderie and support the team provides. Sophomore **Ameya Swami** explained, "My favorite part of swim is just the community and the team. I love the way people cheer for each other during meets." She elaborated, "It's just that team feeling of being supported all the time, no matter what, even when you have your bad days or bad swims and all that." Her favorite memory of the season is seeing someone cheer her on during a race, recalling, "It made me feel so good because I felt like I was kind of lagging behind the rest of the girls, and just seeing that face

cheering for me made me feel so much better and gave me that little bit of energy to finish that last lap." Lasso also praised the swim team's community spirit, describing, "Conversely to club swimming, where the grind is year-round and the morale is low, the environment at LG swim is uplifting and rekindles my passion and drive for the duration of the season." Keep your eyes out for these amazing Wildcats as they crush times and as they finish the season out strong!



HEADFIRST: An LG swimmer dives into the water at the beginning of a race.

POM: Victor Dalesio commits to University of San Diego

by Owen Fugit
Editor-in-Chief

Sailing across the finish line of his high school career, University of San Diego (USD) Division One rowing recruit and LGHS senior **Victor Dalesio** prepares to make the jump from high school to collegiate rowing. Dalesio began his rowing journey in fifth grade, explaining, "It was the closest sport to my house... So I ended up trying it, and I really enjoyed it." Since then, he has gone on to compete at the local, regional, national, and international levels, even winning a national title in eighth grade, which promoted him to the high school team at Los Gatos Rowing Club a year early.

The collegiate rowing recruiting process is a challenging one, according to Dalesio, with thousands of candidates competing for a handful of spots at elite rowing colleges. Dalesio said that choosing USD was "an easy decision." He added, "It felt like I'd be able to fit in really easily." He explained the difficulty of the recruiting process is at USD, citing how USD typically takes eight to 15 athletes in a year. He began talks with the school last year and continued negotiating, practicing, and competing for his spot on the roster. After receiving his offer, USD invited Dalesio and other recruited rowers to spend a week at the school, practicing with the team, exploring campus, and learning more about life at USD. Reflecting on his visit, Dalesio said, "[It was] honestly really fun, pushing myself in front of people that I wanted to



CATCH, DRIVE, FINISH: Dalesio approaches the finish line in a competitive race.

be like... So even though I had just met them throughout that week, it already felt like I had known them for a long time."

Explaining his passion for rowing, Dalesio stated, "There's a lot of high points, especially in winning races because it's really gratifying to cross the finish line and then see all the other boats still charging

toward the finish line." However, Dalesio noted that rowing is not just about beating other people. He said, "For me, it's about just seeing my progress grow and grow, because the competition always fluctuates and changes... So I think just as long as I'm seeing general progress for myself, then I'm happy." In college, Dalesio expects rowing to be more cutthroat and challenging for two reasons: "One, we had to go through that very, very rigorous, selective process, and we deserve our seats. Two, they aren't doing it for nothing, so everyone cares deeply about the sport."

In college, Dalesio hopes to pursue a major in environmental studies, a topic that he takes very seriously. "I care a lot about the environment as someone who spends a lot of time outdoors, as a gardener, as a rower, as a surfer, and someone who lives in the mountains as well. So it's kind of become very near and dear to me."

Dalesio says that, while he enjoys rowing, it is "not for the faint of heart," as the sport can be deceptively challenging. Advising experienced and inexperienced athletes, he recommended, "Listen to the signs that your health is giving you. I had a little bit of a habit of working through sicknesses and maybe some injuries back in the day, which ended up taking me out for more time."

Looking forward to the future, Dalesio said, "I'm hoping to be able to use my position at USD to propel me into the next Olympic Games, where I would like to be representing Brazil in a double."

LG baseball finds success

by Chloe Wilson
Humor Editor

The Los Gatos High School Varsity Baseball Team continues its strong season as it advances through league play. The team has remained undefeated in the De Anza League with a record of 5-0. One of their previous games lasted for two days and for 15 innings. The Wildcats faced the Mountain View Spartans, who have a record of 2-2 in their league play, in this over four-hour long game. The game on Apr. 2 ended in a victory for the Wildcats with a final score of 8-7. With an unusual circumstance of a two-day-long game, the team had time in between innings to prepare. Between these games, senior **Baker Robinson** explained, "We went home, had a good meal, got good rest and came back the next day ready to win." Senior **Tre Golino** greatly contributed to this tough win, only allowing two hits while striking and not allowing a single earned run. Additionally, the team effort continued when junior **Brady Simon** scored a run while going 3-for-6, as well as junior **Rowen Smith** going 2-for-5 with one double and three Run Batted Ins (RBIs).

As the game lasted from Wednesday to Thursday, the Cats had another opportunity to play the Spartans on Friday. The score of this game, on Apr. 4, ended 9-3, reflecting their triumphs of the previous game. They also achieved a 10-7 victory on Apr. 16 against Palo Alto. Their next league opponents will be Homestead, Gunn, and Milpitas, and they will finish out league competing against Wilcox.

Now that the Cats have demonstrated a firm foundation in their league games, they have started to prepare for playoffs. When Robinson was asked how they would change their mindset from last year, he explained, "Go into it and don't underestimate

any opponent, no matter what ranking they are." Senior **Brayden Smith** added, "We'll keep our approach and play as a team, just stay within ourselves and not think too much." Last year, when the Wildcats were competing in the playoffs, they lost to Carmel High School in the first round. This year, they are now ready to change their mindset and preparation. Smith explained, "Our most difficult future game will probably be in the playoffs."

The away game win versus Mountain View High School marked their 14th straight win when playing away games, dating back to last season. They have averaged nine runs per game this season, greatly contributing to their success in away games.

As for the JV team, their season has also been successful with an overall record of 10-5. Sophomore **Matteo Thompson** stated, "Our chemistry is great, and we have been playing together for a long time. The beginning of the season started off slow, but now we are winning more."

Catch the varsity baseball team playing their next game against Burlingame on Apr. 30! (Source: MaxPreps)



STRIKE ONE: An LG baseball player throws a pitch.

LGHS softball competes

by Britt Melinauskas
Sports Editor

The varsity and junior varsity (JV) softball teams are powering through the season with impressive momentum, consistently excelling against each opponent they face. Both squads remain undefeated in league play. JV holds a strong 2-0 record and sits firmly atop the standings, while varsity leads the league with a 3-0 record of its own. As both teams are riding high on early success, the stage is set for a promising continuation of their dominant campaigns.

Sophomore center fielder and JV team captain **Meredith Harris** shared, "One of our goals is to win league for the fourth consecutive year and continue the tradition." However, the JV team has recently faced a unique setback: multiple opponents have forfeited matches, limiting opportunities to compete against teams of equal caliber. While some earlier forfeits were due to weather-related issues, recent cancellations have stemmed from other schools struggling with roster shortages, making it increasingly difficult to schedule and maintain competitive matchups.

The two other team captains, sophomore **Haley Betti** and freshman **Alyshia LaPlante**, have been instrumental in the success of the JV team. Betti, in particular, has been a standout player, leading the team in several key offensive categories. She has hit a home run, two doubles, and one triple, showcasing her power and consistency at the plate.

Freshman **Alexa Cross** has also been exceptional, currently holding the highest batting average on the team at an impressive 0.600. Her consistent ability to get on base and make solid contact has made her a valuable asset to the team.

In a close second, freshman **Monika Leaverton** has also been impressive with a 0.545 batting average.

Outside of league, JV contributes to the record of four wins and one loss, and the varsity has eight wins, five losses, and one tie. The varsity team has proven to be a prominent force as they defeated the Homestead Mustangs, the Los Altos Eagles, the Gunn Titans, and a close loss to the Mountain View Spartans. Similarly, the JV team triumphed over Los Altos, the Santa Clara Bruins, the Branham Bruins, and Mountain View.

On Apr. 5, the Wildcats faced the Monterey Dores, with senior **Lily Young** leading the way. She went 2-for-3, hitting a home run, driving in three Run Batted Ins (RBIs), and scoring two runs, which were pivotal in the team's victory. Junior **Olivia Sickels** also contributed, going 2-for-3, scoring two runs, and stealing a base.

This season, the Wildcats have been impressive all around. Sophomore pitcher **Danica DeSantis** has dominated with a 0.85 ERA, while sophomore **Ava Norquist** has been solid with a 1.83 ERA, making for a strong pitching duo. With both excellent hitting and pitching, the Wildcats are having a standout season and are poised for continued success. (Source: MaxPreps)



HUDDLE UP: LG softball players gather to discuss the game.