

# El Gato

THE STUDENT NEWSPAPER OF LOS GATOS HIGH SCHOOL

## Club Day invites a variety of students

by Jane Wilde  
*Humor Editor*

On Sept. 9, Los Gatos High School held its semiannual Club Day on the front lawn. The school hosts clubs designated for all kinds of interests ranging from debate to K-pop dance. Whether you were interested in meeting new people and furthering your passion, or you simply just wanted candy, Club Day this fall was not one to miss.



JOIN IN: Students browse through different clubs on the front lawn.

Many popular clubs made a return this year, including the National Spanish Honors Society. Senior and co-president of this club **Nico Bianchi** described the group as community-focused and culturally-centered. According to Bianchi, in his freshman year, the club had fewer regular attendees and a lack of overall engagement. However, advisor **Zasu Mazzafero** requested he run for an elected position because she believed he and the students could help “build back what [the club] used to be.” Bianchi was then elected as president alongside senior **Stella Miletich**, and the two have been successful since. The group remained active last year, facilitating several community service events, one of which took place at the House of Hope at Calvary Church where they helped hand out clothes and spoke Spanish to the people there. During regular club meetings, they discuss future volunteer opportunities and introduce foreign foods so members can experience cuisine from Spanish-speaking countries.

## LGHS hosts iconic yearly fundraiser

by Siyona Singhal and Abby Coven  
*Humor and Local Editors*

The annual Magical Glass Pumpkin Patch is an event that the citizens of Los Gatos eagerly await every year. On Sept. 20-21, local glassblowing artists showcased and sold their unique glass pumpkins on LGHS's front lawn.



COLORFUL CRAFTS: Local artists display their hand-crafted glass pumpkins.

According to one of the main event organizers, Shelly Monfort, the pumpkin patch featured ten artists and 3,000 pumpkins, including pumpkins all the way from Ohio. As Monfort explained, “We brought their pumpkins in because it was kind of a nice [to offer] something fresh and new and a little bit different for everybody.” Every year, the pumpkin patch generates an average of one hundred thousand dollars of revenue. The majority of that revenue goes back to the artists, some covers the expenses of the patch, and roughly 12-15 percent is given to LGHS to supplement events hosted by the Electives and English departments. Montfort elaborated, “Poets and honorariums are paid to come in, to talk and read their work and answer questions from students. That might inspire a student to become a poet or be involved in journalism.” Monfort added that the pumpkin patch organizers make sure teachers decide what to use the money for, since teachers often do not receive discretionary funds from the school’s budget.

Senior **Kat Littfin** and co-president of LGHS Politicos said a lifelong interest in politics inspired her to create the club to emphasize the importance of being politically involved as a high school student. Littfin described the birthplace of her passion for politics: “Since I was young, the news was always on in my house. I would always sit down and watch it; it interested me a lot.” Once she reached high school, she realized the importance of being educated about current events and having an overall awareness of national and international events. Littfin hopes this year, the club can help more students be involved in important political processes, especially because some seniors are coming of voting age. Additionally, the club hopes to have representatives in to talk to the class about how to get involved.

Senior and president of Animal Rescue Friends (ARF) **Sara Rich** described how ARF works directly with the Silicon Valley Humane Society (SVHS). According to Rich, the club’s latest endeavor involves “host[ing] a food-packing event where we pack food for animals.” She explained that SVHS then delivers these packs of food to shelter dogs in the area. At regular meetings, ARF makes toys and blankets to keep dogs at SVHS warm and comfortable while they wait for their forever homes.

Club Day is the perfect opportunity to utilize your creativity and passion while engaging in your community and getting to know new people. If you missed Club Day this semester, do not fret. Most clubs still accept applicants via instagram or email. Mark your calendars for next semester’s Club Day!



ROAR: Lion mascot invites new members to join the international Leo's Club.

Volunteer Coordinator and LGHS alum **Genoa Fox** explained how she got involved with the pumpkin patch: “I graduated from Los Gatos High School and started working with Tom Stanton, who’s one of the founders for the patch. He was like, ‘Do you have any interest in glass blowing?’ And I was like, ‘Yeah,’ and I became his apprentice for a lot of years, and then he introduced me to Ken and Shelly, and they founded the patch.” She reflected on her role as Volunteer Coordinator: “I have the most awesome volunteers as the Volunteer Coordinator. I get to work with the students and people who love being here, so I honestly have the best job.” Fox shared that her favorite part of the event is “the magic of the patch. I love working with the people, and it’s a really good community. It’s such a positive event. It’s absolutely my favorite.”

Visitors like Janet Berkman attended the pumpkin patch to support local artists and LGHS as well as to enjoy the “relaxing atmosphere.” In addition to building her pumpkin collection at home, Berkman enthused, “It’s nice to see the vendors come together and show their wares.”

Glassblowing artist and LGHS alum **Andrew Stanton** participates in the patch each year as a way to carry forward the work and philanthropy of his father, Tom Stanton, and to honor his father’s legacy. The beauty of the event, according to Stanton, is how it brings together artists who use a variety of styles in one place.

This year’s pumpkin patch drew a large crowd that supported the school and offered each visitor the opportunity to become a part of this special tradition.



FALL HARVEST: Visitors use the weekend to peruse the magical glass pumpkins.

## In this Issue...

### Local News

- Friends of Los Gatos Library organizes September pop-up
- Police set new regulations on e-bike riders
- New California law reduces phone usage in schools



### National

- Previously unseen Epstein file reveals birthday letter from Trump
- Department of Justice requires Google to share data with competitors



### World

- Nepal’s violent demonstrations continue to surge throughout the country

### Games

- El Gato presents back-to-school themed word games for September

### Editorial

- El Gato urges students to pay attention to Los Gatos local politics

### Opinion

- Chang addresses the issues of de-extinction
- Muthukrishnan critiques the SAT system

### Center

- El Gato encourages readers to pick their niche emotions

### Culture

- Carpenter releases new album
- Hathaway summarizes recent My Life with the Walter Boys season



### Humor

- Gruetter expresses her love for her neighbor’s goats
- Banno details her relationship with Labubus

### People

- Sophomore **Aiden Gao** scales his way through San Jose Youth Symphony and challenging classes
- Senior **Stella Miletich** debuts career as singer-songwriter while balancing her rigorous academic course load

### Sports

- Girls’ flag football celebrates win and new uniforms
- Pandey predicts new NFL season’s top teams
- POM: **Mathijs Dirven** excels as water polo team captain





# SOM: Liz Olson shines entering her fifth year at LGHS

by **Tori Schubert and Ivan Habib**  
*People Editor and Website Manager*

Library technician and pro multitasker **Liz Olson** is entering her fifth year at Los Gatos High School, taking on more than ever before. Facilitating Cats Homework Help, Speech and Debate, Reality Check, and Link Crew in addition to her library responsibilities, Olson fills her calendar to the brim, connecting with a significant portion of students and making her mark with Wildcat spirit. Whether she is behind the library counter or at a school event, her warmth and enthusiasm radiate across campus, rendering her an irreplaceable pillar of the school community.

Working primarily as a library technician, Olson fills her 7:30 AM to 4:00 PM shift with careful research, finding and purchasing books for the student body while also taking suggestions from staff, stimulating the creativity and interest in literature of the LGHS community. She also hosts a variety of classes for small group activities. Olson expressed her joy in working with students, describing them as “so respectful and wonderful, and my very favorite part of the job.” Prior to working in the library, Olson ran the testing center, another job that requires the cultivation of a positive and welcoming community, something Olson is an expert at. Although fond of both positions, she found the library opening intriguing, hoping “it would give me an opportunity to interact with a greater population of the school.” Her kindness motivates Olson to provide a caring environment for students, incorporating her love of literature with her outgoing nature.



CHEESE: Olson poses with retired colleague **Mariana Cozzella** for Reality Check.

Beyond the library, Olson is very enthusiastic about supporting clubs and initiatives at Los Gatos High School. This year, she is advising Speech and Debate as well as Cats Homework Help. In addition, she helps lead both Link Crew, a student-led program to make LGHS more inclusive and welcoming, especially for freshmen, as well as Reality Check, creating monthly issues addressing topics most relevant to high school students. She explained, “I try to help where I can and create a safe space for [students] to come in and feel like they can decompress,” and she believes supporting clubs and other organizations helps her accomplish this. The part of her job she thoroughly detests “is turning kids away during tutorial, because I hate to do

that,” though frequently over a hundred students flock to the library, far exceeding its limited capacity, from 10:00 to 10:35 AM.

Outside of her job at school, Olson enjoys spending time with her two sons, her rescue dog, Coda, and her cat, Phoebe. On the weekends, she said, “My family and I like to go to Santa Cruz a lot and hang out at the ocean or go on hikes.” She has one senior in Los Gatos High School as well as a freshman at California Polytechnic State University in San Luis Obispo. Of course, she also reads extensively during her free time, especially historical fiction and mysteries. As we head into Halloween, she gives Mexican Gothic her highest recommendation, pointing out, “It’s a really good kind of haunted house type mystery.” If you are ever looking for your next novel or just someone to lean on, Olson is always happy to be there for you.



AWAY FROM WORK: Olson enjoys a break from school with a day by the ocean.

# News-in-Brief: LGHS kicks off choir camp and more

**Back-to-school night at LGHS:** On Sept. 11, Los Gatos High School hosted its annual back-to-school night, filling the campus with a lively atmosphere as parents and guardians navigated through their students’ classes. Attendees first visited even-day class periods, then proceeded to odd-day courses, with a five-minute passing period in between. Each class lasted ten minutes and offered parents and guardians a chance to familiarize themselves with the school, learn about their student’s curriculum, meet teachers, and ask any questions they might have. The event is always an exciting night, as it marks the official start of another school year!

- **Jordan Park**, *Website Manager*

**LGHS hosts 2025 Unplugged talent show:** The annual Unplugged talent show took place in the LGHS theater on Sept. 19. The show featured multiple students showcasing their unique gifts, including dancing, singing, and other art forms. The show primarily included a variety of songs, including Bennie and the Jets by Nico-Deschaux-Baume and Guy Shaham, as well as This Town by Joey Soria. Overall, the event was a wonderful opportunity for students to see their peers’ talents. Everyone involved in the show has played a big role in elevating Los Gatos’s school spirit.

- **Atharava Pandey**, *Sports Editor*

**High school launches choir camp:** LGHS Choir held its annual choir camp last weekend, on Sept. 20. The choir’s student leadership committee arrived at 8:00 AM to set up decorations and put final touches on the event. Singers from all grades came together to rehearse for their fall concert in October, participate in team bonding, and play games. The event marks the beginning of a year-long collaboration among all three choirs — Concert, Mixed, and Treble — to combine forces for pieces like Les Misérables Medley, which they will perform this October. This year will be filled with fresh music for the ensemble; consider supporting them by attending their concert this fall.

- **Sahil Muthukrishnan**, *Culture Editor*

**New plans for California’s Great America:** California’s Great America in Silicon Valley disclosed that beginning Nov. 2, it will lay off 184 seasonal workers. Six Flags, the park’s parent company, released a statement saying the park will remain open for the 2026 season and that the cuts are part of its seasonal operations. The theme park will also shorten its holiday season, wrapping up on Oct. 26; previous holiday seasons at Great America ended in early January. In addition, Great America cancelled much of their live entertainment including the Halloween-themed Tricks and Treats as

well as Winterfest much to the disappointment of seasonal visitors. (Sources: LA Times, Mercury News)

- **Kloe Adams**, *Games Creator*



COUNT OFF: Student choir group rehearses during 2025 LGHS choir camp.

# LGHS Robotics prepares

by **Siyona Singhal**  
*Humor Editor*

After a long 2025 competition season, the LGHS Robotics team, Iron Claw, is getting ready for their first tournament of the school year.

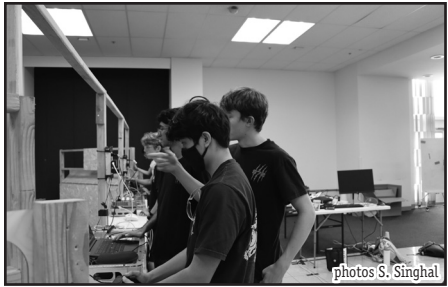
Every year, Bellarmine College Preparatory, home to the Cheesy Poofs, hosts Chezy Champs. 46 robotics teams compete against each other with the same robot as their competition season, which ended in April. The 2025 season game was Reefscape, an underwater-themed match where teams had to score pieces of coral and algae to collect points. Reefscape will also be the game played at Chezy. Iron Claw has been working hard after school to prepare for the three-day-long competition.

One of the technical project managers of the team, senior **James Smith**, commented on how the team has been preparing: “We’ve had a group of students go out to Mountain View, where there’s a practice field, and we’ve been going there every weekend to get prepared and get things dialed down.” Currently, the team’s main focus is improving the reliability and sturdiness of the robot, as that was a major problem in the competition season. Smith explained that the biggest challenge of leading the team is “getting back onto our feet since our team manager, **[Rodrigo Coppelli]**, left last year. Working with **[Lalitha Maruvada]** has been great, and we’re starting to get our systems down.” To delegate responsibilities, the Iron Claw leadership team has rolled out a new task management system, making sure everyone knows their jobs.



TESTING TIME: The robot navigates around the practice field.

Junior and control systems subteam lead **Avik Agarwal** is adapting to his new leadership role. He explained that the hardest part of his job is making sure everyone on the sub-team has meaningful work to do that contributes to the success of the team. To fix this issue, Agarwal explained how he has been “spending a lot of time on [the team’s task managing system] and assigning tasks to people.” Agarwal has also been working towards the team’s goal of improving the robot’s reliability by “creating new procedures for troubleshooting [Controller Area Network (CAN)] errors, along with researching new kinds of connectors for the CAN bus.”



READY UP: Senior **Alexander Chan** gets the robot ready.

Senior **Eric Jacobson**, a lead on the programming subteam, is excelling in his role. For the 2025 competition season, Jacobson created the scouting app, which the team uses during matches to track other teams and the points scored during a match. He commented that the hardest part of making the app was “learning how to code and react with no prior knowledge in JavaScript. Also, there’s a range of people that you have to instruct. Accommodating for certain people’s needs was something that I struggled with.” Jacobson is most looking forward to “seeing our robot in full motion because our robot was really good last year, but because of technical issues, we couldn’t see it run a lot during competitions, so I’m excited to see it on the field working well.”

Iron Claw Robotics is toiling around the clock to get ready for Chezy Champs. With improved reliability and great leadership, they’re sure to return with a victory!

# Littfin updates on 9H

by **Kat Littfin**  
*Editorial Editor*

Last year, the Los Gatos High School English Department decided to remove English 9 Honors as a course option for incoming freshmen, meaning they no longer have an advanced English course. In August, the first set of students for whom this change affected began their freshman year of high school, and LGHS is optimistic about the results of their productivity and behavior in the new course.

Historically, ninth-graders could pick two Honors-level classes: Honors Biology and Honors English. Previously, students had to test into these courses, but in recent years, LGHS has been more flexible about prerequisites for ninth-grade accelerated courses. Part of the objective of eliminating English 9 Honors was to lessen the competitive and stressful nature of taking Honors courses freshman year. Teachers and administrators worried that parents were having too much of a say in their student’s schedules, encouraging



AUTHOR TALK: Francisco Jimenez shares his autobiography.

them to take courses solely for the grade boost, rather than because of their student’s ability or interest. By removing English Honors, LGHS hoped to create a common ground for all incoming freshmen through a class that all must take.

To accommodate the change in the English department, freshman English teachers **Kathleen Wehr**, **Zachary Davison-Wilson**, **Mollie Hicok-Parker**, and **Anne Martyn** had to make some adjustments. “It has made us collaborate a lot more,” Wehr stated, describing the shifts in the English department’s effect on teachers. “Ms. Martyn joined the fold, and Mr. DW has come in, so the four of us [including Hicok Parker] have been working very closely together to make sure that the standards are high for all students.”

Most importantly, the teachers had to rework their lesson plans to find a medium between the curriculum of regular freshman English and English 9 Honors. Wehr explained, “We have put together a whole first unit of Breaking Through that combined what we did with [English] 9 Honors with regular, and it’s working really well.” On Sept. 17, as a part of the curriculum, LGHS welcomed the author of Breaking Through, Francisco Jimenez, to speak with all freshmen about his memoir.

Since the school year started, freshmen have overcome the daunting task of acclimating to a new school with new classes. Wehr is excited about the way that the change to the English department has impacted the freshmen’s first few months of school. Regarding the shift, Wehr said: “It has actually been very positive...Kids who are struggling have the models of the kids who are really proficient, and I’m trying to keep it at that level to where the kids who are proficient can still push themselves.” The dynamic that Wehr describes allows students to collaborate in ways that are conducive to learning while building connections with each other.

Although eliminating Honors English once seemed like a drastic change to the LGHS community, the observable impact on students has been overwhelmingly positive. It has encouraged the freshmen to motivate themselves and seek help and inspiration from each other, achieving LGHS’s goal to build a stronger community.



# Friends of Los Gatos Library hosts September pop-up

by Advika Anand and Lila Zamansky  
*Graphics and Media Production Editors*

For over four decades, the Los Gatos Library has been more than a place to borrow books; it has been a center of learning, creativity, and connection within the community. At the heart of this success is the Friends of Los Gatos Library, a volunteer-run nonprofit dedicated to funding library enhancements and recreational programs. Their mission is to bring people together through literature and books, beginning with pop-ups whose funds directly support the library's programs, events, and activities.

Their latest pop-up, the second annual Patio Book Sale on Sept. 13, offered customers the opportunity to socialize while getting a great deal by purchasing two books for one dollar. The bookstore sells books either cycled through the public library or donated by residents, creating a more sustainable process. Books not sold at the pop-ups are then donated to different organizations or other smaller libraries in the town to ensure that every book finds a purpose. As store manager Lisa Schirmer pointed out, "These pop-ups are the book's last hurrahs."



SHOPPIN' AROUND: Customers browse books at the pop up.

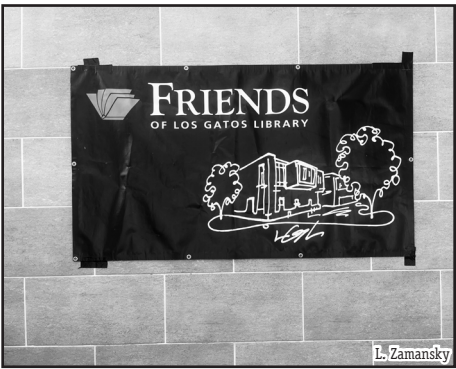
Events like these have become a signature part of how the Friends of Los Gatos Library engages with the community through affordable books that are available to all.

Beyond pop-ups, the Friends of the Los Gatos Library ties much of their work to other Los Gatos businesses. As a downtown institution, the bookstore can more easily connect with and promote

local shops and restaurants, allowing for joint events and growth opportunities. For example, they have partnered with Willow Street and Zona Rosa for various gatherings, with 20% of the restaurants' proceeds going to the store. Additionally, in the spring, the Friends of Los Gatos Library and the clothing store J. McLaughlin hosted Sip & Shop, an event which featured a combination of wine and stylish clothes. This type of partnership not only provides important funding for the library but also gives a business visibility within the community.

Aside from local businesses, Friends of the Los Gatos Library also connects with the community through their volunteer program. High school students and other residents help out by running the bookstore or lending a hand during special events. Audrey Baenziger, an online student at Arizona State University, decided to volunteer with The Friends of the Los Gatos Library for her internship class. She shared that the experience has given her a chance to connect with people in town and learn how the bookstore runs. Schirmer added, "The process is very easy, and it is not stressful to volunteer here. You get to basically talk to people all day, help them find books, and organize the books."

The Friends of Los Gatos Library is a great nonprofit establishment that supplies the public library with an additional source of funds that ultimately allows for the community's pursuit of knowledge, alongside maintaining the library's resources. If any readers are interested in signing up to volunteer, there are applications on the front desk of the store, and the store is always open for eager readers and volunteers alike.

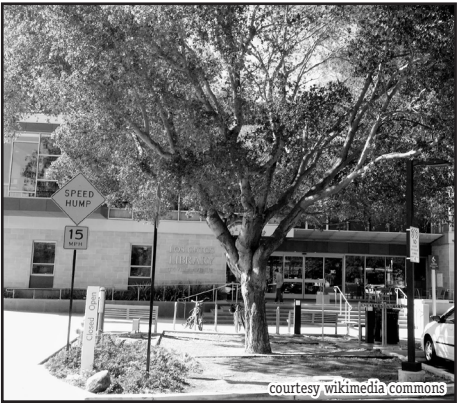


OPEN FOR BUSINESS: The library opens its book sale.

# Mobile food truck opens Schools reduce phone usage

by Abby Coven  
*News Editor*

A new mobile food program serving low-income neighbors opened outside the Los Gatos Public Library last month. The "Park-It Market" is a refrigerated food truck that can feed up to 100 households a day. Providing a wide range of groceries like fresh fruit and vegetables, meats, bakery items, dry goods, canned food, and dairy products, the food is free of charge for low income residents in town.



PARK HERE: The truck can be found near the LG Library.

West Valley Community Services (WVCS) is a local nonprofit that fights poverty by providing food, housing assistance, and support services to indigent and unhoused individuals in Los Gatos and nearby cities. While WVCS has a food pantry at its Cupertino headquarters, the location isn't easily accessible to seniors, disabled individuals, and families with young children. Clients struggled because they often had to take multiple buses just to get to the location, and sometimes their groceries would perish before arriving home. Others had to find extended childcare so they could make the trip to the pantry. To address these transportation challenges, the WVCS team created a mobile food pantry to be closer to other places their clients frequented, including senior centers, elementary schools, and community colleges.

Donald Akimoto, WVCS's Manager of Mobile Operations, says the food truck "provides an opportunity for clients to shop with dignity, keeping their integrity, without embarrassment or judgment." Residents are often hesitant to shop

at the "Park-It Market" because of the stigma associated with not having enough money for food and other necessities. This can happen in Los Gatos when seniors own their home but live on a fixed income of retirement benefits from Social Security. Shopping at the mobile food pantry means they can use the money they save on groceries for other important needs like home repairs. Clients are also worried about the federal administration's plan to cut back or eliminate some federally-funded food assistance programs for those experiencing financial hardship.

The new, blue "Park-It Market" truck is scheduled to be parked outside the Los Gatos Public Library on the second and fourth Thursdays of each month between 10:00 AM and 11:15 AM. Community members do not have to meet any eligibility criteria, like age, or other requirements to receive food from the van.



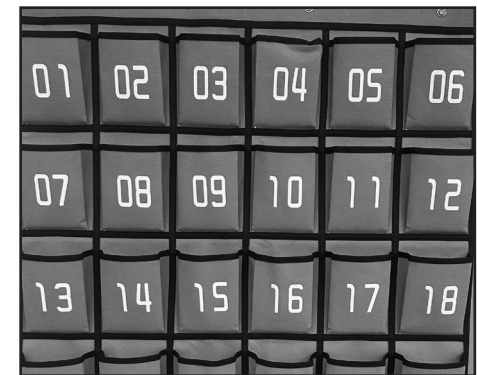
RIGHT HERE: Scan the QR code to get involved with WVCS.

In addition to groceries, the food truck has a private office where WVCS staff meet with low-income individuals to learn about their needs and offer help and referrals. The organization serves 350 households in Los Gatos through programs other than food assistance including housing and financial support. WVCS hopes to serve 500 households with the Los Gatos van and other vans it uses for park-it markets in Saratoga, Campbell, and Cupertino. (Sources: Los Gatan, SJ Spotlight, WVCS)

by Gowri Sunil  
*News Editor*

Starting this fall, the Phone Free School Act in California went into effect, with the goal of reducing smartphone use in school and its consequential distractions. Earlier this year, California governor Gavin Newsom signed Assembly Bill 3216 enacting the Phone Free School Act to begin limiting the time students spend on their smartphones during school hours. The legislation seeks to fully restrict phones by July 2026, giving schools around a year to implement this restriction.

The new law requires all schools in California to implement phone restrictive policies like phone pockets, which Los Gatos High School uses, and Yondr pouches. Phone pockets are strung out posters with pockets available for students to put



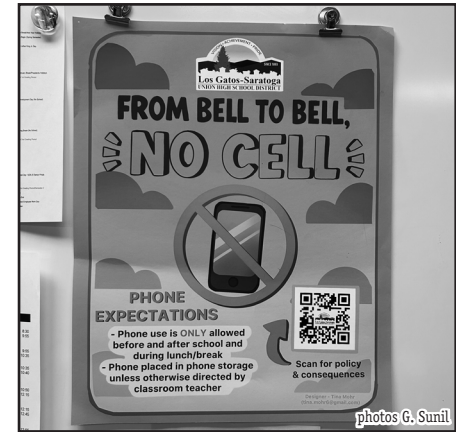
NO PHONES: Schools add cell phone pockets to classrooms.

their phones in while Yondr Cases are individual pouches only openable with a magnetic device.

At Los Gatos High School, the policy has already begun. In the 2024-25 school year, teachers had flexibility in deciding their own class's cell phone policy. But this year, the school mandated students to turn in their cell phones at the start of class and collect them at the end. Students must stay off their phones during instructional time, with the exception of passing periods, break, and lunch.

Describing the student response, **Kathleen Wehr**, a ninth grade English teacher at Los Gatos High School, has seen some surprising results regarding the new policy. Last year, Wehr allowed her students to keep their phones and maintain

the privilege as long as it didn't become disruptive. Expecting some resistance to the new policy, she was surprised by the compliance of her students upon her requests to remove earbuds. In addition, Wehr is pleased to have not found any of the usual shenanigans like burner phones or empty phone cases so far. She pointed out that "as I have all freshmen, and many of them are from Fisher, they're much more used to stricter rules."



BELL TO BELL: A poster explains the new phone rules.

**Mark Yanowsky**, an art and Multimedia Journalism teacher, also reports no resistance from his students regarding the policy as he had already enforced it last year. Previously, his classes used phones as a creative tool for projects such as the photography unit in Multimedia Journalism. Now he finds the school-provided iPads a simple way to combat the strict phone policy. He explained, "As a culture we just need to practice and teach about managing distractions in order to make our best creative work and be our best self."

As California gravitates towards greater control over phones in school, Los Gatos still allows students some flexibility during lunch and passing periods. While the law aims to bring positive changes for students, maintaining our school's policy relies on the student body's cooperation and understanding. (Source: NY Times)

# Police set new regulations for e-bikes in Los Gatos

by Arnav Singhal  
*Sports Editor*

Though school has been in session for almost two months many students are wondering why Los Gatos Police officers are still cracking down on e-bike usage within the town. Within the past few years, e-bike usage within Los Gatos has skyrocketed. Students often remark the bike racks overflowing with more e-bikes than traditional bikes. Their convenience, affordability, and ability to cover short distances efficiently have made them a favorable option for many residents. For teenagers, an e-bike means independence and freedom to get around without relying on parents for rides. However, as with many innovations, their convenience has also led to challenges that the town can no longer ignore.

E-bikes undeniably bring many conveniences to students; they allow for a lightweight yet affordable option for transportation. They provide a safe and favorable option for travel, saving students' and parents' time on hectic mornings. Environmentally, they produce fewer carbon emissions and reduce traffic congestion. According to Science Direct, "e-bikes could replace 57.6% of car trips" providing a decrease in more than half of greenhouse gas emissions.

Yet with this freedom, students have begun taking advantage of this amazing resource, breaking rules and causing distractions in town. Residents have spotted high school e-bike users in parks chasing geese and weaving recklessly in and out of car lanes. To avoid collisions, drivers must brake and swerve suddenly. Beyond reckless riding, many students are using illegal or modified e-bikes. California's state law regulates e-bikes to three classes: class one, which has pedal assist up to 20 miles per hour (mph); class two, which has throttle and pedal assist up to 20 mph; and class three, which has throttle to 20 mph and pedal assist up to 28 mph. However, many students have exceeded these limits and use altered e-bikes that can reach 35 mph on commercial roads and 45 mph on downhill slopes. These speeds approach those of motorcycles and cars, without the same safety training or standards drivers must follow to obtain their license. Consequently, in late August the fatal accident rate increased to more than two in a single week.

As the frequency of these incidents rises, LG police officers have responded with stricter enforcement on helmet usage and e-bike speed in school areas. Officers have heavily monitored the intersection of Nino and Los Gatos Boulevard as well as the front entrance to Los Gatos High School.

As the town faces this major issue, the police hopes that these stricter policies serve as a wake up call to the future of e-bike use within Los Gatos. (Sources: Los Gatan, Reddit)



A NEW ORDER: Police establish e-bike zones and regulation around the town.



- US v. Google trial releases phone data
- Religious conflict causes funding loss

# Trump administration urges Texas redistricting

by Kayla Mitchell  
*Public Relations Manager*

This June, President Donald Trump proposed the idea of a mid-decade redistricting in Texas, a political maneuver that has since set off a chain reaction across the United States. With the 2026 midterm elections approaching and the House of Representatives nearly evenly split between parties, Trump has effectively ignited a nationwide redistricting battle. His decisions in Texas have catapulted the US into a redistricting war as both parties scramble to take the House before the midterm elections.

In order to gain political control of the House of Representatives before the US midterm elections, President Trump began to prompt Republican states to redraw their district lines. In an interview about Trump's sudden push for redistricting Texas, Trump responded, "I got the highest vote in the history of Texas, as you probably know, and we are entitled to five more seats." Besides taking away seats from Democrats in Texas, Trump's redistricting efforts are gaining attention for redrawing the district lines in ways that would disempower minorities in the state, especially Black and Hispanic voters. Texan Republican Governor Greg Abbott is supporting the redistricting efforts, and on Aug. 20th,

the Texas House of Representatives approved the new maps with a party-line vote. The congressional districts are now drawn in a way that could potentially earn Republicans five new House seats and significantly strengthen the Republican Party's power before the midterm elections.

The Texas Democrats' efforts to delay the redistricting in Texas gave time for Democrats in other states to prepare to fight back against the redistricting maneuvers. Democratic states, particularly California, are now propelling their own redistricting plans. The California legislature approved Governor Gavin Newsom's proposal calling for a special election that would suspend California's current districts drawn by an independent commission and replace them with a map intended to favor Democrats. California's redistricting efforts will appear on the ballot in November as Proposition 50. In an interview regarding his plans in California, Newsom said, "We tried to hold hands and talk about the way the world should be. We can't just think differently, we have to act differently."

As a response to the efforts in California and Texas, more states have started to consider redrawing their congressional district lines to gain political power. The Missouri State Senate recently voted on a redistricting plan that now awaits the sig-

nature of Republican Governor Mike Kehoe. It is possible that redistricting will begin in other Republican states, including Florida and Ohio, whose state maps are expiring and redrawing of district lines could win Republicans up to three new seats. Democratic states such as Illinois, Maryland, New York, and Utah are also contemplating the idea of redistricting and picking up additional seats. The influx of new states into this gerrymandering for political power could propel the nation into a never-ending redistricting battle to win power in the House. (Sources: CalMatters, NPR Politico, NY Times)



ADDRESS: California's Governor Gavin Newsom speaks on defending democracy.

# Google releases its user data

by Hayley Strahs  
*Editor-in-Chief*

On Sept. 2, Judge Amit Mehta of the US District Court for the District of Columbia ruled in US v. Google that Google must share its data to comply with antitrust laws. In 2024, courts found the company in violation of Section 2 of the Sherman Act, which prohibits harmful monopolies in the American economy. US v. Google is the biggest tech-related antitrust case since the landmark US v. Microsoft, in which the US government forced Microsoft to limit its jurisdiction over the personal computer market.



ORDER: The D.C. Court of Appeals held US v. Google trial. and now has restrictions on RSAs. The Monopoly Busters Caucus in the House of Representatives issued a statement, commenting, "In practice, this ruling allows Google to stay a monopoly. Despite finding Google guilty of search monopolization, the court is allowing the company to retain Chrome and Android, key tools that Google uses to dominate the market." While Mehta claims that Google's data held more monopolistic utility than its software, critics, such as Open Markets Institute Thinktank Executive Director Barry Lynn, are calling the decision "a slap on the wrist" for such a large-scale monopoly suit. However, with the rise of generative AI technology, the economic value of pure search data is skyrocketing. Google's technological dominance has yet to hit the AI world; companies like OpenAI and Anthropic consistently outrank Google's AI tool, Gemini, in performance and popularity. Nonetheless, the landmark ruling affirms Google's current monopoly position within search engines and leaves much up in the air regarding the uptick in AI usage. As regulations regarding AI increase, Google and other corporations have an unprecedented technological future ahead of them. (Sources: Cornell Law School Legal Information Institute, NY Times, Purdue Global Law School Review, University of Miami Law Review)



ON TRIAL: The Google headquarters stationed in California.

# US withholds college funding

by Quinn Hathaway  
*Media Production Editor*

Federal Judge Allison Burrough ruled to overturn the Trump administration's freeze of Harvard University's research funding on Sep. 3. Judge Burrough ruled that freezing funds violates the university's free speech rights, allowing money to resume flowing.

Following Oct. 7, 2023, students at Harvard University, as well as from many other colleges, protested heavily regarding the conflict between Israel and Gaza. As a result, President Donald Trump declared many universities "antisemitic," as activists were protesting in defense of Gaza, which he viewed as opposing the United States. In April, Trump started to cut off funding when Harvard rejected a list of government demands regarding their "antisemitic" issues. In total, Trump rebuffed 2.6 billion dollars, and Harvard took the case to court. Other universities, including Duke, Northwestern, Cornell, and Brown, reached agreements with the Trump administration in hopes of restoring funds and ending the investigation. While many US federal judges supported Trump's decisions, others, including United States District Judge Loren Alikan, were appalled and have issued orders against the pauses on the grants.

Boston-based Judge Borough recently released an 84-page ruling, stating that the current administration "used antisemitism as a smoke-screen for a targeted, ideologically-motivated assault on this country's premier universities." Harvard, whom the government has been withholding funding from since April, has been considering paying an exorbitant sum of money to close the whole ordeal, as Trump stated he would settle for no less than 500 million dollars. However, Burrough's case opens the door to possible resolutions as the appeal processes in court.

Burrough's writing and speeches outline her acknowledgement of Harvard's deep-rooted antisemitism, writing that "Harvard was wrong to tolerate hateful behavior for as long as it did," but ultimately, she disagreed with the correlation between moral issues and federal funding. After Burrough released her ruling, a Harvard spokesperson stated that the college has recently begun to see reinstatement notices arrive from the previously terminated federal funding sites. However, the school has yet to actually receive any payments. Appeals can take anywhere from three to eighteen months to process in court, and additional time may be required if the case is referred to the Supreme Court.

Many Harvard officials are upset about the funding freeze, as Harvard's president, Alan M. Garber asserted, "[No government] should dictate what private universities can teach, whom they can admit and hire, and which areas of study and inquiry they can pursue." The case remains open as Harvard attempts to uphold their original virtues amid the ideologically motivated assault. (Sources: BBC, Harvard, NBC, NYT)



SPEAK UP: Citizens hold protest in Washington, D.C.

# Recent Epstein files suggest connections to political figures

by Sam Gruetter  
*Editor-in-Chief*

In 2008 and 2019, a jury convicted American financier Jeffrey Epstein on charges related to sex-trafficking minors, catalyzing an investigation into the mogul's numerous connections to politicians, including current President Donald Trump and former President Bill Clinton. Following an extensive period of political turmoil sparked by the release of several Epstein documents, the government has released another wave of these reports, which reveal even more information about those who attended Epstein's islands and engaged with him on both economic and social levels. On Sept. 8, the House Oversight

Committee released several new documents it recovered from the Epstein estate. The most notable was a signed birthday card to Epstein from President Trump, a document that the latter continues to claim is falsified and does not exist. The letter consists of a suggestively drawn female silhouette that houses a birthday message to Epstein and concludes with Trump's signature. While no smoking gun evidence confirms Trump actually wrote this letter, his previous ties to Epstein add a deeper layer of nuance to this supposed birthday card.

While the bombshell of this new wave of information was undoubtedly the documents linking Trump and Epstein, several other documents revealed equally important ties between Epstein and a myriad of other political figures, including former President Clinton, lawyer Alan Dershowitz, and an English ambassador, Peter Mandelson. A string of emails revealed an in-depth relationship between Mandelson and Epstein, where Mandelson even expressed anger over Epstein's 2008 conviction, revelations that ultimately led to Mandelson's termination. The Foreign Office addressed this conflict, stating, "The emails show that the depth and extent of Peter Mandelson's relationship with Jeffrey Epstein is materially different from that known at the time of his appointment." The ties to Clinton were significantly less incriminating, with the files merely containing a birthday card from Clinton to Epstein and Clinton alleging he cut ties with Epstein long before women brought forth allegations against Epstein.



LIGHTS, CAMERA: Epstein poses with his ex-girlfriend Ghislaine Maxwell.

Another important revelation about the Epstein files that took place in July is that no client list had Donald Trump's name on it. Rumors about this supposed client list first surfaced when Pam Bondi, the US Attorney General, claimed upcoming releases of Epstein files would include a list of Epstein's clients, or those who used him to solicit sex from underage girls. The FBI did not substantiate this claim. (Sources: CNN, NYT)



SCENE OF THE CRIME: Epstein's private island located in the US Virgin Islands.



- New vaccine gets approved
- Nepal overthrows its government

## APVMA approves a new chlamydia vaccine for koalas

by **Kloe Adams**  
*Games Creator*

The Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) approved the production and widespread use of a vaccine that prevents chlamydia in koalas. Found only in Australia, koalas are considered endangered in Queensland, New South Wales, and the Australian Capital Territory. Numerous threats endanger koalas’ lives, including disease, habitat loss, climate change, and road collisions.

Koalas contract chlamydia through mating, infected discharges, and at birth. Baby koalas, also known as joeys, can catch chlamydia by eating their infected mother’s pap, a substance similar to feces. When contracted, koalas face an abundance of symptoms, including blindness, infertility, and bladder damage. As a result of blindness, koalas have difficulty locating trees to climb for food, ultimately leading to starvation. While veterinarians used antibiotics in the past to treat chlamydia, the antibiotics were not fully effective and did not prevent further infections. Additionally, antibiotics lead to gastrointestinal side effects that hinder the koalas’ ability to digest eucalyptus leaves, their main food source. Depending

on the severity of the chlamydia and its progression, euthanasia may be the only option.

Researchers at the University of Sunshine Coast (UniSC) in Australia have worked for the past ten years developing a single-dose vaccine that does not require a booster. Research leader, Professor Peter Timms, commented on their new vaccine: “We knew a single-dose vaccine — with no need for a booster — was the answer to reducing the rapid, devastating spread of this disease, which accounts for as much as half of koala deaths across all wild populations in Australia.” With APVMA’s recent approval, veterinarians can now use the vaccine in wildlife hospitals, veterinary clinics, and in the field to protect the nation’s most at-risk koalas. Certain individual colonies face a greater risk of extinction, particularly in South East Queensland and New South Wales, where infection rates within populations are often around 50 percent and, in extreme cases, can reach as high as 70 percent.

The new vaccine is “based on Chlamydia pecorum’s major outer membrane protein (MOMP), and offers three levels of protection – reducing infection, preventing progression to clinical disease and, in some cases, reversing existing symptoms,” senior researcher at the UniSC, Sam Phillips, commented. In a study Phillips led

last year, findings showed that the vaccine reduced signs of chlamydia during a koala’s breeding age and decreased death from the disease by 64 percent. Researchers and veterinarians hope to see continued positive results through June 2027, when the permit authorizing the use of the vaccine ends. (Sources: CNN, LA Times, NPR)



SAVED: APVMA has allowed for koalas to be given a new vaccine.

## British royal family is reunited

by **Advika Anand**  
*Graphics Editor*

On Sept. 10, Prince Harry and King Charles III reunited for the first time in over a year. The father and son met at Clarence House in London and shared a private tea. The meeting did not last long, but the fact that it happened at all carried more meaning than its length. After months of distance, even a short moment of face-to-face time stood out as a step forward.

The timing is especially significant since King Charles has been undergoing cancer treatment and that he has limited his ability to carry out his public duties. His health adds extra urgency to repairing family bonds, especially with Prince Harry. For Harry, the visit was brief but layered. He came to the UK for a charity event connected to the Invictus Games, one of his long-term projects that supports veterans. In past interviews, Harry has said that he regrets how strained things have become and wants



REUNITED: The royal family has gotten strained over time.

to spend more time with his father, making this reunion especially significant to him.

Although they have taken the first steps towards reconciliation, not everything has been settled yet. Harry has been in legal disputes about police protection whenever he visits Britain, and those tensions remain. His memoir, Spare, and several interviews also revealed private family details, which undermined trust within the royal household. While Charles may want to move toward reconciliation, he also has to protect and maintain his reputation as monarch. Royal aides and advisors likely helped to arrange this meeting quietly so that it could happen without becoming too public too soon.

Public reactions have been mixed. Some see the reunion as a genuine moment of healing, while others view it as more symbolic than real. The British monarchy has always carried an image of unity, and citizens closely watch for what is said about the family as an institution. Commentators point out that past royal rifts have sometimes smoothed over with time, but in this case, there are still visible gaps. Harry’s relationship with Prince William remains tense, and Meghan’s absence continues to highlight the distance between the Sussexes and the rest of the family.

Looking ahead, it is uncertain whether this meeting will open the door to more regular visits. The question of security and the possibility of Harry’s bringing his children to the UK remains unresolved. Experts suggest that the reconciliation is fragile, but even a fragile step can be important. For now, the reunion stands as a reminder that beneath the titles and media attention, this is still a family attempting to find its way back to one another. (Sources: ABC News, Fox News, People, NY Times, Washington Post)

## Nepal overthrows its government following mass protest

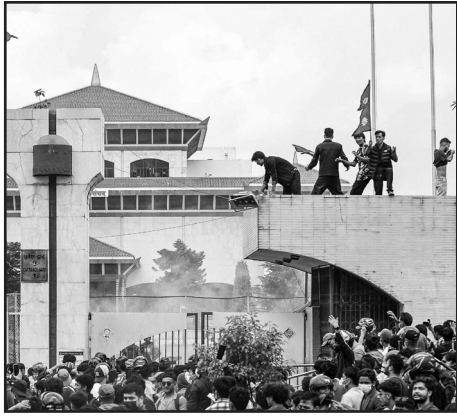
by **Lydia Liu**  
*Public Relations Manager*

In September 2025, Nepal experienced unprecedented political unrest as widespread protests led by Generation Z erupted nationwide in response to growing government restrictions on freedom of expression and political dissent. As public anger intensified, the government imposed a ban on 26 social media platforms, including Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp. While officials said it was for regulatory reasons, many people saw it as an attempt to silence opposition, which angered young people across the country.

The unrest reached a tragic peak when protesters set the residence of former Prime Minister Jhalanath Khanal ablaze. His wife, Rajyalaxmi Chitrakar, was inside the house at the time and sustained critical burns. Rushed to Kirtipur Burn Hospital, Chitrakar ultimately succumbed to her injuries, becoming one of the most high-profile casualties of the violence. This incident highlighted the intensity of the protests and the deep-seated anger towards the political elite.

The violence has led to the resignation of Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli on Sept. 9. The resignation

was caused by the backlash that he faced with Generation Z from banning social media platforms. In the aftermath, Former Chief Justice Sushila Karki of Nepal’s Supreme Court, known for her anti-corruption stance, was appointed as Nepal’s first female interim prime minister. Many saw her appointment as a step towards political reform and a more accountable government.



FORCED OUT: The residence of Khanal was heavily damaged.

## Chile releases 19-year-old pilot

by **Kat Littfin**  
*Editorial Editor*

On Jun. 28, Chilean authorities apprehended 19-year-old influencer and cancer activist Ethan Guo on King George Island off the coast of Antarctica. Nearly two months later, on Sept. 7, officials released Guo. His story is astonishing and has a significant mission behind it.

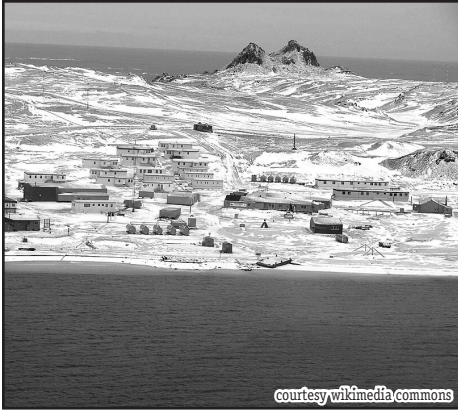
Guo’s flight to Antarctica began with an ambitious goal: to fly to all seven continents. At the age of 17, Guo obtained his pilot’s license. Shortly after, he began to build a social media presence with which he shared his journey while also raising awareness about a cause important to him: childhood cancer. Inspired by his cousin’s diagnosis with stage four blood cancer, Guo hoped to raise one million dollars for cancer research through social media. Using Instagram and TikTok, he detailed his experiences visiting various cities and meeting patients with cancer from around the world. By his departure to Antarctica, Guo amassed 1.4 million followers on Instagram and over 600 thousand followers on TikTok.

Antarctica was the last continent that Guo needed to land in to attain his goal. Hoping to raise even more money for his cause, Guo departed for Antarctica on June 28 from Puerto Arenas, Chile, in his bright red Cessna airplane. His original flight plan, which he submitted to Chilean authorities, was not to land in Antarctica but instead to fly over the continent and return to Puerto Arenas. Guo alleged that an unexpected storm made it impossible for him to continue on his planned path, so he instead diverted and landed on King George Island. Chilean officials apprehended him the same day he departed and brought him to President Eduardo Frei Montalva Air Force Base in Antarctica. Officials held him

there until his trial in August. On the base, Guo stayed in a secluded bunker and reportedly lost twenty pounds. With his birthday in July, he turned twenty during his captivity.

Guo attained Chilean lawyers, who, using evidence of his flight plans and air traffic control records, convinced the Chilean government to dismiss his charges. In return, the government required Guo to pay 30 thousand dollars to a Chilean childhood cancer charity named Fundación Nuestros Hijos (“Our Children Foundation”), and he cannot re-enter the country for three years.

Since his release, Guo has yet to post anything, but he has stated, “I look forward to resuming my global fight against cancer.” Despite his harrowing experience, Guo remains motivated to fight for the cause on which he staked his safety in the first place. Already making an impact in cancer research, Guo’s remarkable journey will likely continue to grow his already significant platform, allowing him to enact more change. (Sources: BBC, NY Times)



TAKE-OFF: Chilean base in Antarctica where Guo was held.

uprisings occurred in neighboring countries, including Sri Lanka and Bangladesh, driven by shared grievances among young people who feel they have no choice in the government are frustrated with corrupt elites. Analysts view these movements as a response to structural issues and a digitally empowered generation demanding reform and accountability. (Sources: AP News, HRW, NY Times, Reuters)



FIRE: The protests hurt a lot of Nepal government officials.



- Solve LG-themed Connections
- Play cozy Spot the Difference

# GAMES

El Gato • Friday, September 26, 2025 • Los Gatos High School • [www.elgatonews.com](http://www.elgatonews.com)

## CONNECTIONS

BLOSSOM	BLVD	PHILZ	JONES
VASONA	EASY	DOLCE	MAIN
SANTA CRUZ	PRESSED	MANRESA	FLUME
CREEK	BEAR	WINCHESTER	ROSY

J. Wilde

## word search

A. Singhal

S	R	P	R	H	S	U	N	F	L	O	W	E	R	S	C	A	X	R	W
S	Q	F	N	M	U	T	U	A	B	T	I	Q	R	O	Y	H	R	K	I
T	U	N	Z	K	I	H	P	Y	Q	X	D	O	R	H	M	P	D	D	V
F	Q	X	G	K	D	O	A	H	N	L	Q	N	Y	G	R	Z	U	I	L
S	T	P	G	S	L	O	V	X	G	S	W	J	N	E	D	K	X	C	E
R	S	Q	T	T	T	V	Z	L	E	G	X	T	D	F	A	X	R	J	A
K	A	Y	M	K	F	L	M	P	A	Q	T	I	N	T	E	Y	F	C	V
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Q	B	R	C	S	P	S	M	S	Q	V	Z	D	C	R	Y	F	R	S	E
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Z	D	R	A	E	N	D	H	P	A	E	Y	G	A	B	Y	I	O	C	A
F	L	O	K	F	V	N	I	L	L	L	H	F	W	C	R	K	N	S	F
M	Z	W	B	Z	X	S	M	P	L	K	J	X	L	E	P	T	T	B	G

Autumn	Harvest	Fall	Farmers
Pumpkin	Football	Grapes	Sunflowers
Spice	Sweater	Labor Day	Corn
Leaves	Apple Cider	Scarecrow	Squirrel

## Meow Libs

The day before senior year, I told my 1)\_\_\_\_\_ that I didn't want my car decorated with 2)\_\_\_\_\_ and paint, as I didn't want to feel 3)\_\_\_\_\_. Despite my pleas, I woke up to see outside of my bedroom window that my car was covered in 4)\_\_\_\_\_ as my 5)\_\_\_\_\_ shouted, "HAPPY FIRST DAY." To my surprise, I yelled 6)\_\_\_\_\_. After my 7)\_\_\_\_\_ start to the morning, I 8)\_\_\_\_\_ made my way down to the stairs and grabbed my 9)\_\_\_\_\_ themed backpack and rushed to my 10)\_\_\_\_\_, and just like that I was on my way to my first day of school. As I was making my way, my stomach made a(n) 11)\_\_\_\_\_ sound as I passed Starbucks, so I stopped inside for a quick bite. After I got my food, I headed back to the whip and found a dead 12)\_\_\_\_\_ in my path; I had just stepped on it with my new 13)\_\_\_\_\_, 14)"\_\_\_\_\_." The moment I got back into my car a 15)\_\_\_\_\_ rear-ended me, which caused me to go flying through my windshield, but luckily I wasn't injured in the slightest. My ride was totally busted, but at least 16)\_\_\_\_\_ still boomed out through the 17)\_\_\_\_\_ hole through my front windshield. Everyone at Starbucks that morning was in a(n) 18)\_\_\_\_\_ mood, so much so that customers started 19)\_\_\_\_\_ out the cafe doors to join me in a dance party right there in the parking lot. Gosh, what a crazy way to start my day. 20)"\_\_\_\_\_, " it's already 21)\_\_\_\_\_! N. Kramer

- |                 |                    |                         |                            |
|-----------------|--------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1)Family member | 7)Adjective        | 13)Type of footwear     | 19)Verb ending in ing      |
| 2)Noun          | 8)Past-tense verb  | 14)Exclamation          | 20)Exclamation of surprise |
| 3)Adjective     | 9)Disney character | 15)Type of vehicle      | 21)Time                    |
| 4)Noun          | 10)Type of vehicle | 16)Guilty pleasure song |                            |
| 5)Family member | 11)Adjective       | 17)Adjective            |                            |
| 6)Exclamation   | 12)Type of animal  | 18)Adjective            |                            |

## CHAIN CONNECTIONS

BACK TO

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L\_\_\_\_\_

W\_\_\_\_\_

P\_\_\_\_\_

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E\_\_\_\_\_

AUTUMN

S. Mithukrishnan

## SPOT THE 5 DIFFERENCES



A. Pan



Game Rules



Puzzle Solutions



- Los Gatos residents should advocate for change

LG must use activism to preserve the community

by **Tori Schubert, Siyona Singhal, Hayley Strahs, and Nelson Kramer**

*People Editor, Humor Editor, and Editors-in-Chief*

Los Gatos is a small, tight-knit community where residents care about maintaining their neighborhoods and community spaces. For this reason, we have local smoking restrictions, fire safety, and environmental conservation programs to support our thriving citizens and local businesses. On the individual level, many people in Los Gatos care about managing and maintaining the community in which they live. However, when we face significant changes in our community, it becomes even harder to stand up and feel like a singular voice within the town makes any impact.

Los Gatos residents are seeing an increase in housing development signage in town. We hear news of our local hardware store closing or plans to demolish the downtown post office for new housing. Around town, residents are voicing concern over the new Tesla dealership opening on Los Gatos Boulevard and other community-wide issues, such as whether or not people should have the ability to play pickleball on community tennis courts.

How can we stand up for ourselves and prompt change in a town of nearly 40,000 people? How can we succeed in the quest to advocate for our beliefs? It takes a village to influence change, so Los Gatos residents must stand up and voice their beliefs if they want to see change in the community.

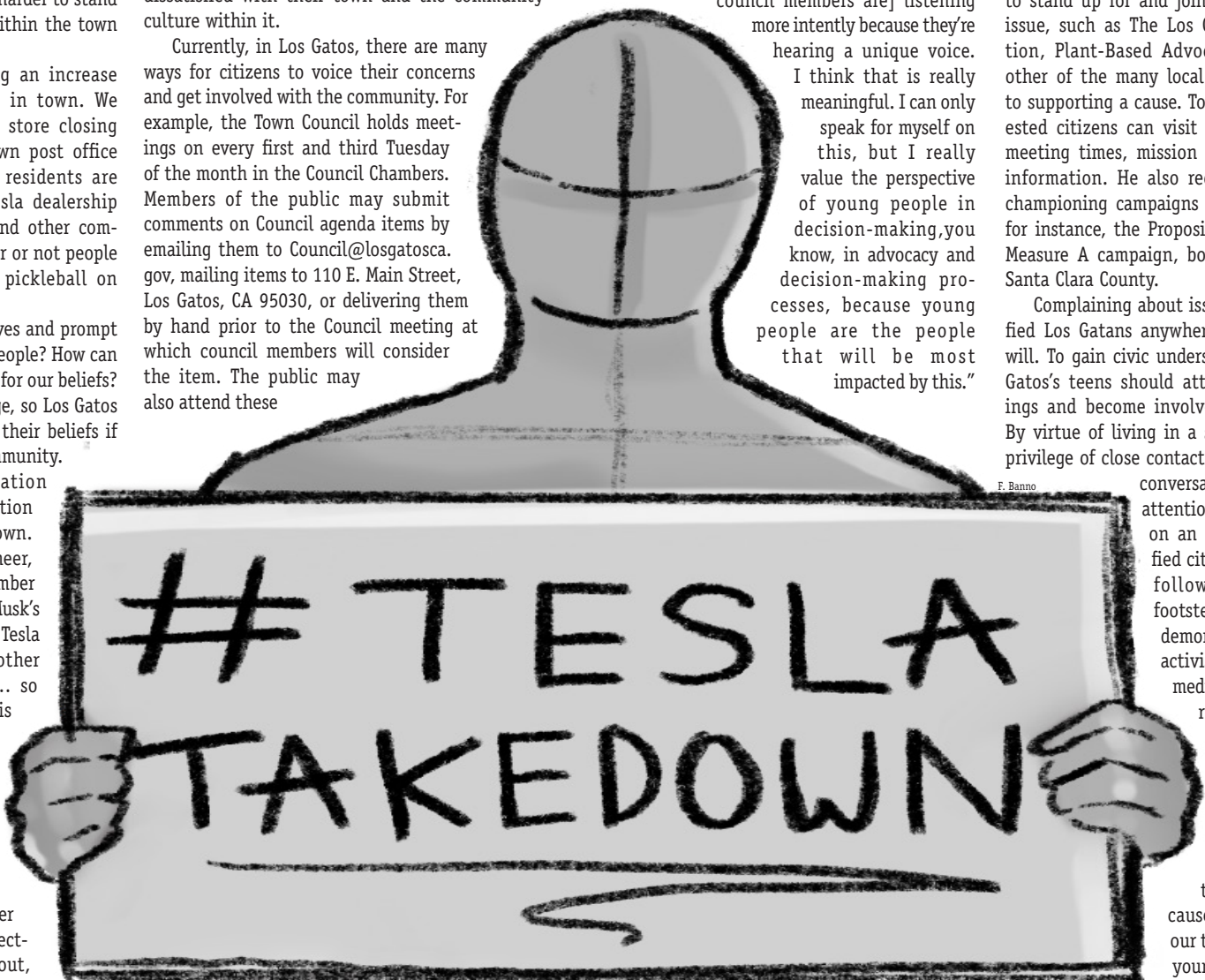
Recently, the local organization #TeslaTakedown formed in opposition to the new Tesla dealership in town. George Hoffman, a software engineer, local protester, and enthusiastic member of #TeslaTakedown, identified Elon Musk’s vulnerability: “His wealth is largely Tesla stock, and he gets a lot of his other wealth through leveraging that ... so if the Tesla stock goes down, he is vastly disempowered.” Through peaceful protests and regular meetings, the group is hoping to drop Tesla’s stock value and limit Musk’s power. Instead of giving up or acquiescing to their beliefs, people are acting on their values and utilizing their resources, eager to effect change. Rather than neglecting issues they are passionate about,

citizens need to speak out for what they believe in, particularly in a small community such as Los Gatos. Hoffman emphasized the significance of participation: “The point of having more people is to have people notice, to have more options to get the message out and build more of a coalition.” Our town is not particularly diverse, leading to majority groups outnumbering and silencing marginalized opinions. Although it can take courage to speak out, if problems remain unaddressed, they will continue to fester. Even when holding a minority opinion, by staying silent, people risk being dissatisfied with their town and the community culture within it.

Currently, in Los Gatos, there are many ways for citizens to voice their concerns and get involved with the community. For example, the Town Council holds meetings on every first and third Tuesday of the month in the Council Chambers. Members of the public may submit comments on Council agenda items by emailing them to Council@losgatosca.gov, mailing items to 110 E. Main Street, Los Gatos, CA 95030, or delivering them by hand prior to the Council meeting at which council members will consider the item. The public may also attend these

meetings and comment on an issue or bring printed and audio/visual material to present to the Council. Member of the town’s youth commission and junior at LGHS **Nova Jayaraj** commented, “The easiest way to voice concerns is at town council meetings. They really value the opinion of younger people because the typical demographic of attendees is older and retired people.” Los Gatos Vice Mayor Rob Moore echoed Jayaraj’s sentiments: “When you bring in a totally unique perspective from a young person who might bring a totally different view or lens or whatever, to the conversation, you can tell [the council members are] listening more intently because they’re hearing a unique voice.

I think that is really meaningful. I can only speak for myself on this, but I really value the perspective of young people in decision-making, you know, in advocacy and decision-making processes, because young people are the people that will be most impacted by this.”



F. Banno

In addition to individuals, advocacy groups also play a significant role in shaping decisions, as Moore elaborated: “I think that public pressure really works, especially on the local level. Sometimes, for really big discussions or controversial discussions, groups will mobilize, and they’ll bring out a dozen people themselves. 50% of the people speaking that evening, all asking for one thing, it makes a huge impact on our decision making.”

Moore’s advice for students looking to pursue advocacy further is to first find what they want to stand up for and join a group related to that issue, such as The Los Gatos Anti-Racism Coalition, Plant-Based Advocates Los Gatos, or any other of the many local organizations dedicated to supporting a cause. To join these groups, interested citizens can visit the groups’ websites for meeting times, mission statements, and contact information. He also recommended finding and championing campaigns in your area of interest, for instance, the Proposition 50 campaign or the Measure A campaign, both of which are local to Santa Clara County.

Complaining about issues will not get dissatisfied Los Gatans anywhere, but activism can and will. To gain civic understanding of our area, Los Gatos’s teens should attend town council meetings and become involved in local government. By virtue of living in a small town, we have the privilege of close contact with our legislators; one conversation can lead to further attention and prioritizing action on an issue. Moreover, unsatisfied citizens of Los Gatos should follow in #TeslaTakedown’s footsteps and consider peaceful demonstrations as a method of activism. In the age of social media, it’s never been easier to research and rally to solve local problems. While it may seem daunting, protesting and participating in local government are advantageous and nonharmful ways to garner support for a cause. So don’t wait: utilize our town’s resources and make your voice heard.



SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
28	29 Girls Varsity Field Hockey vs. Saratoga Girls Volleyball @ Palo Alto	30 Girls Varsity Golf vs. Mountain View Girls Tennis @ Lynbrook	1 Girls Field Hockey @ Mitty Girls Volleyball vs. Gunn	2 Girls Golf vs. Milpitas Water Polo vs. Harker	3 Girls Water Polo @ Menlo Boys Water Polo @ Jesuit Football vs. Pittsburg	4 Girls Flag Football @ Alameda
5	6 October Break Girls Flag Football vs. Santa Clara	7 Spirit Week Cross Country League Meet	8 Spirit Week Girls Field Hockey vs. Santa Clara	9 Spirit Week Girls Tennis @ Cupertino	10 Spirit Rally Boys Football vs. Sacred Heart	11 Homecoming Dance Cross Country Clovis Meet
12	13 Girls Flag Football vs. Milpitas	14 Girls Tennis vs. Mountain View	15 MOSAIC lesson Girls Golf at Gunn	16 Boys Water Polo @ Gunn Girls Water Polo @ Homestead	17 Boys Football @ Wilcox	18
19	20 Girls Field Hockey @ Monta Vista	21 Cross Country League Meet	22 Girls Flag Football @ Santa Clara	23 Girls Golf @ Milpitas	24 Boys Water Polo vs. Bellarmine	25 Boys Football @ Menlo
26	27 Girls Field Hockey vs Mitty	28 Girls Tennis @ Homestead	29	30 Boys Football vs. Menlo-Atherton	31 Halloween	

HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY?

SEND ALL THOUGHTS, COMMENTS, & QUESTIONS TO: 

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- Do not bring back extinct animals
- Stop overpaying athletes

# Strahs encourages students to start reading for fun

by Hayley Strahs  
Editor-in-Chief



It's no secret that you can't judge a book by its cover, but can you even judge it by the words on its pages? Students groan over complex books like *Into the Wild* and *Brave New World*, texts they often find difficult to understand without further analysis. Even Rick Riordan's *Percy Jackson* and the *Olympians* series deals with the hard-hitting themes of trauma and self-acceptance. To recognize these often-hidden messages in books, readers have to study books closely, which is different from simply reading for entertainment. And contrary to popular belief, there is nothing wrong with the latter. Books should remain an option for entertainment, and readers shouldn't be afraid to accept a story at surface value.

The term "anti-intellectualism," which Merriam-Webster defines as "opposing or hostile to intellectuals or to an intellectual view or approach," is spreading exponentially as child literacy rates go down and money in the AI business goes up. A 2024 essay in *The Atlantic* titled *The Elite College Students Who Can't Read Books* gained a lot of attention after claiming that

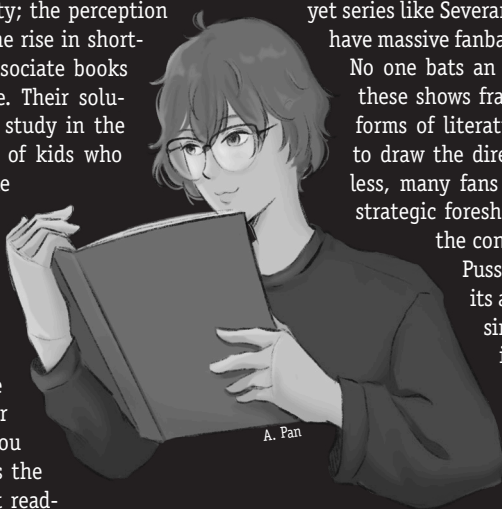
students at Columbia University were struggling to complete the historic Literature Humanities reading list. The books themselves haven't changed in difficulty; the perception of reading as an activity has. Due to the rise in short-form content, Gen Z students often associate books with deep thought instead of pleasure. Their solution? They don't read. According to a study in the research journal *iScience*, the number of kids who read for fun has dropped 40 percent in the last two decades.

Reading, in the words of YouTuber, writer, and publisher Jananie Velu, is "an intellectual hobby," unlike watching television or movies. In a video she posted to her YouTube channel, this-storyaintover, she insists "reading quite literally engages a different part of your brain [than watching a video] because you are using your imagination [to process the information]." While she's correct that reading stimulates a different part of the brain than watching a video does, Velu fails to acknowledge that films often hold the same complexity and nuances as literature. Velu claims that

"reading specifically is very different from other forms of entertainment, which you could argue are simply to turn off your brain," yet series like *Severance*, *The White Lotus*, and *Adolescence* have massive fanbases of both casual and critical viewers.

No one bats an eye when fans choose not to dissect these shows frame by frame. Video media, like many forms of literature, often requires intensive analysis to draw the director's intended conclusion. Nonetheless, many fans of *Severance* remain oblivious to its strategic foreshadowing and still enjoy the show; on the contrary, many fans of the children's film *Puss in Boots: The Last Wish* have analyzed its animation, plot, and score down to the singular frame. Whether the public likes it or not, books and videos require the same level of intellect to truly derive meaning from them.

Reading is dying, and fear-mongers of anti-intellectualism are killing it. So, don't wait: finish that neglected book on your nightstand, whether you truly "understand" it or not. (Sources: *iScience*, *The Atlantic*, YouTube)



# Whole Foods is not healthy

by Abby Coven  
News Editor



As the Whole Foods megastore on Los Gatos Boulevard is on the verge of opening, the establishment has yet to deliver on the promises and image it puts forward. Whole Foods

distinguishes itself by having more healthy, environmentally conscious foods through its marketing, atmosphere, and even the verbiage on product labels. But most people are unaware of what happens behind the scenes that makes these marketing tools deceitful. Whole Foods should actually be offering the premium and sustainable products that it claims to have if it wants to continue to charge high prices and sell an eco-friendly image.



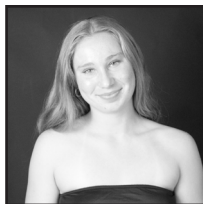
While the store promotes an organic image, it actually offers a large number of highly processed products. Consumers often think there are only two systems of food production. One is the industrial food system, which is the main form of production behind fast food. The second is the local food system, such as local farms and farmers' markets. Whole Foods markets itself as part of the local food system, but it falls somewhere in between. This grey area is called industrial organic and is only slightly better than the industrial food system.

In addition, the "eco-friendly" persona the store showcases is entirely misleading. While flying or shipping food across the globe does cater to customers' desire for year-round fresh fruit and vegetables, it also produces massive carbon emissions. The fossil fuels used in transportation and the reliance on fancy plastic packaging have a negative impact on the environment. Moreover, Amazon bought Whole Foods in 2017 and tarnished its noncorporate image. Amazon's reputation as one of the largest, environmentally unfriendly, and ethically challenged corporations in the world makes its ownership of Whole Foods run counter to Whole Foods's methodically curated culture. Amazon's impact on Whole Foods has forced them to centralize food producers even more, which has phased out increasing numbers of local and regional brands.

The recipe for Whole Foods's success is for it to stop selling lies for profit. To do this, the store should either de-greenify its wording or actually offer a majority of products that are truly organic and sustainable. (Sources: CNBC, Food and Power, Whole Foods)

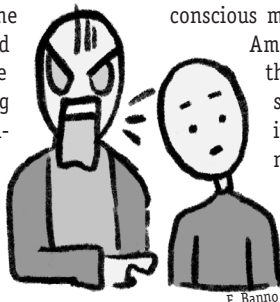
# Embrace your emotions

by Sam Gruetter  
Editor-in-Chief



Recently, social media users have identified nonchalance as the emotional cheat code to save face. In a broader context, Gen Z has begun to associate indifference with self-preservation, leading teenagers to avoid awkward and potentially vulnerable conversations about feelings, a behavioral pattern whose consequences extend far beyond damaging relationships. Teenagers need to stop perpetuating emotional suppression under the guise of "nonchalance." Instead, they should encourage healthy outlets and stronger peer-to-peer communication skills.

The concept of being indifferent, with a specific emphasis on the term "nonchalant," has gained increasing popularity over the last few years, with the hashtag #nonchalant garnering 500 thousand posts on the social media platform TikTok. As Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines it, nonchalance is "having an air of easy unconcern or indifference." While this may seem like a comfortable pace for one to coast through life, indifference is not a default setting, meaning those who are hiding under this apathetic guise are likely repressing their true emotions and desires. The tendency to ignore complex feelings has severe, negative impacts on one's emotional cognition, especially in teenagers, whose brains are still developing and learning to process emo-



tions. According to the National Institute of Health, "Suppression leaves intact the subjective experience of negative emotion but decreases the experience of positive emotions." While suppression is successful at numbing feelings short-term, in the long-term, the emotions still manifest themselves in one's daily life, often more severely and frequently, making this mechanism ultimately counterproductive. Suppression not only worsens negative emotions but also minimizes positive ones, making it a harmful coping mechanism that damages the balance of an already imbalanced teenage mind.

Emotional suppression is not only destructive to internal emotional regulation but also to interpersonal relationships. There are obvious reasons: apathy hinders one's ability to form deep connections with others and maintain healthy, long-term ties. But there are also subconscious manifestations. In a study scientist Amelia Butler conducted, she found that "interacting with a partner who suppressed was more stressful than interacting with a partner who acted naturally, as indexed by increases in blood pressure." Nonchalance extends far past the individual and negatively affects those around them, resulting in diminished one-on-one interactions and worsening trends of social anxiety in an already anxious generation.

So the next time you strive to appear nonchalant, remember that it is only thinly veiled suppression and, in the long term, you will only end up being more chalang. Instead, learn to embrace feeling your emotions as they come. (Source: National Institute of Health)

# Chang warns against the revival of extinct animals

by Tanya Chang  
Sports Editor



The idea of bringing back woolly mammoths or passenger pigeons sounds like something straight out of a science fiction movie. But what if I told you that soon this is going to become our reality? Colossal Biosciences has raised hundreds of millions of dollars, promising "de-extinction," claiming it can restore ecosystems or even

slow down climate change. The thought of Ice Age giants roaming the tundra is exciting, but the resources used to chase the past could be better spent protecting the future. Instead of pouring money into recreating species that have been gone for centuries, we should redirect those funds toward saving the countless animals today that are already on the brink of extinction.

De-extinction is not actually possible yet because the technology to bring back extinct species simply does not exist. Since the ancient DNA is too fragmented to fix as a whole, scientists suggest that any "mammoth" or "dodo" we see would be a genetically engineered substitute — a modified elephant or pigeon at best. These animals may resemble characters of the extinct species, but genetically, they are not the same.

Even if the science worked adequately, there are immense ecological risks; the habitats that these animals used to flourish

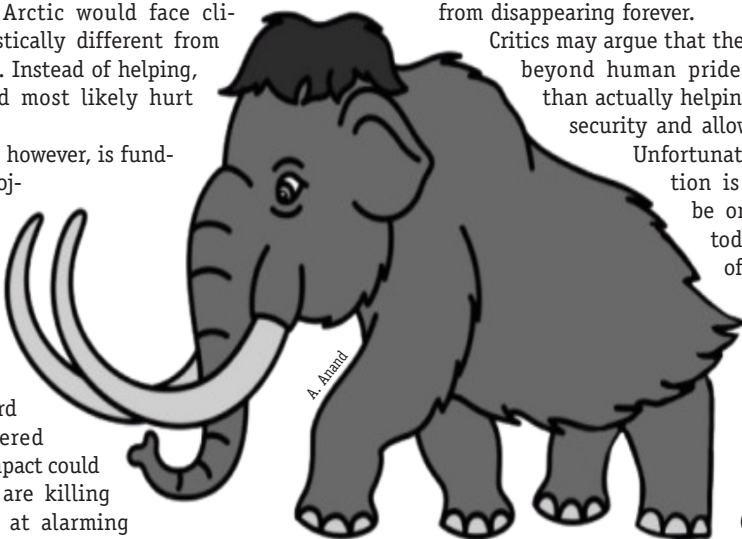
in can drastically change conditions. If the scientist released the dodo bird on Mauritius today, it would encounter invasive predators and destroy forests. Scientists placing mammoths in the Arctic would face climates that are drastically different from those of the Ice Age. Instead of helping, de-extinction would most likely hurt the ecosystem.

The biggest issue, however, is funding. De-extinction projects have already received hundreds of millions of dollars, with no visible effect. If the funding Colossal Biosciences received were directed toward protecting endangered species, a tangible impact could be made. Poachers are killing elephants for ivory at alarming rates, orangutans are losing their rainforests due to palm oil plantations, and ocean pollution is threatening sea turtles. Scientists estimate that nearly one million species

will face extinction within the next couple of decades. Redirecting these funds into protected habitats, anti-poaching programs, or breeding efforts could save countless species from disappearing forever.

Critics may argue that the effect of de-extinction extends beyond human pride and flashy headlines, rather than actually helping animals. It gives us a sense of security and allows us to address past mistakes. Unfortunately, the reality is that extinction is permanent. Our focus should be on preventing the extinction of today's species to address the root of the problem.

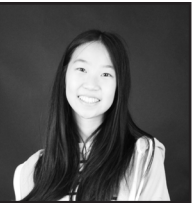
The idea of bringing animals back to life is exhilarating, but the future of animals that exist now matters more. Every dollar, every lab hour, and every effort of science should go into saving the animals and ecosystems that we still have today. Our focus should be on proteing life as it currently exists rather than chasing shadows of what we have lost. (Sources: CNN, Colossal Biosciences, Science AAAS)





# Don't monetize mental health

by Annabelle Pan  
Graphics Editor



often reflect societal beliefs and values, yet right now, online galleries house numerous depictions of individual self-harm, depression, and anxiety. The drawings themselves are not the problem; it's the mindset. Artists need to stop creating pieces centered on mental health struggles just to get attention.

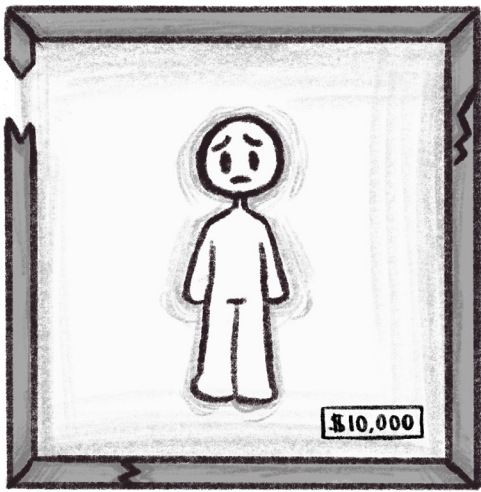
On the one hand, many people use their artwork to show recovery from depression or anxiety, focusing on their strength and recovery. Not only do these drawings help the artists express themselves and heal from their experiences, but they also inspire those still trying to cope with these mental illnesses and spread awareness.

On the other hand, pieces depicting methods of self-harm, the utter hopelessness of depression, and exaggerations of self-medicating neither inspire nor heal. On social media, there are videos with captions like "day 52 of drawing something every day until I'm not depressed anymore" or "what's the point of living?" These trends actually promote and encourage mental illnesses, suggesting struggling with their mental health is "cool" and "trendy."

Artists, primarily those who post on social media, need to be mindful of the effects their videos could

**Trigger Warning:**  
**This article contains references to self-harm.**

Art serves as a universal method of self-expression, a way to process the world, and a medium to share ideas. Art trends



F. Banno

have on viewers. There's no problem in posting a drawing that includes aspects describing self-harm to spread awareness, but people should not post a drawing that only shows someone hurting themselves without a meaningful message. It glorifies self-harm but neither encourages those struggling to seek help nor spreads awareness that mental illnesses are serious health issues.

Additionally, more and more students are depicting mental health struggles for contest artwork. The initial increase in these types of contests make sense considering the United States is in a national mental health crisis, but now these contests are encouraging students to draw about anxiety or depression even if the artist does not have experience with these issues. Why? Such artwork tends to place higher in competitions and garner

more attention from judges, usually because they are very personal and relevant to our generation. Art featuring sadness in general receives more attention because observers often relate better to such emotions. Some artists take advantage of this empathetic quality and

make sad art for contests or social media, using fake emotions to draw in views. This needs to stop.

Artists should not create pieces featuring mental illnesses just to gain attention or clout. It doesn't emotionally benefit the creator and causes viewers to think that struggling with their mental health is desirable.

# Promoting grind culture is toxic

by Claudia Casal  
People Editor



office, all in an attempt to build their startup and get ahead in a specific field. Yet this grind culture bleeds into a high schooler's life as the pressure to succeed impacts nearly everyone who lives in the area. This type of mindset is dangerous and must be condemned by parents and schools, as it can damage one's mental and physical health as well as promote unrealistic expectations.

Among Silicon Valley high schools, 3 AM study sessions and skipping sports practice to stay caught up with classes are all too common. The authors of a study published by the National Library of Medicine concluded that "long working hours were shown to adversely affect the occupational health of workers." The effects of overworking can impact every part of a student's life and even hinder their performance in the long term. Thus, districts need to move school culture away from academic competition and place a bigger emphasis on mental health, rather than standardized test scores.

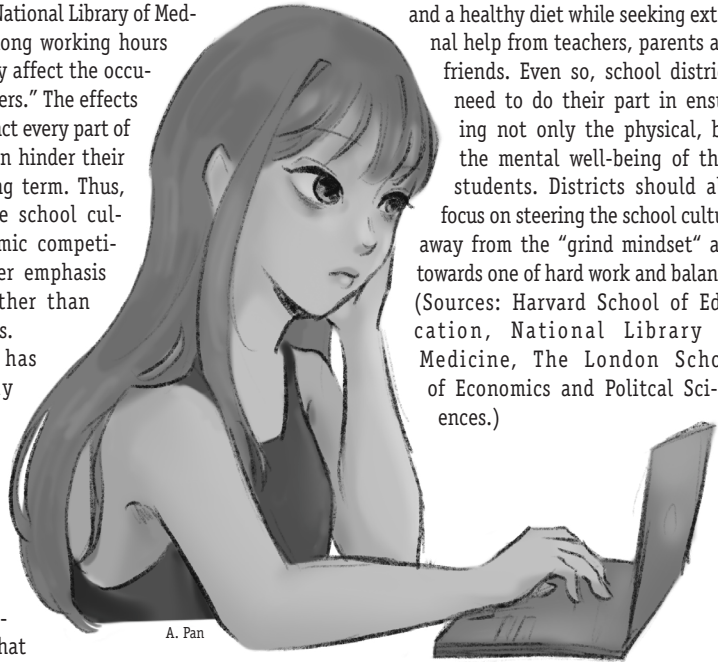
Academic fatigue has become increasingly common among students, according to the London School of Economics and Political Sciences (LSE). LSE's article on the subject included Dr. Daniel Madigan's commentary: "It appears that

burnout not only leaves students psychologically and physically withdrawn from their studies but also inhibits their academic performance. Given the substantial pressures that students currently face, the findings are particularly concerning." A Harvard survey also concluded that 27% of students experience this exhaustion, while 53% of students feel pressure to be exceptional through their achievements. These kinds of emotional and physical harms can bleed into other areas of a student's life, particularly at home.

Additionally, grind culture perpetuates the narrative that one should always be working, which leads to a person's inability to rest meaningfully or take time to enjoy aspects of life other than work. This culture also promotes the idea that an individual is only socially valuable if they are contributing to their future or corporation, tying their self-worth to their academic and professional achievements.

Luckily, not all hope is lost; there are many ways one can avoid burnout. Students can also avoid academic fatigue by focusing on regular exercise

and a healthy diet while seeking external help from teachers, parents and friends. Even so, school districts need to do their part in ensuring not only the physical, but the mental well-being of their students. Districts should also focus on steering the school culture away from the "grind mindset" and towards one of hard work and balance. (Sources: Harvard School of Education, National Library of Medicine, The London School of Economics and Political Sciences.)



A. Pan

# Economic inequality unfairly distorts SAT performance

by Sahil Muthukrishnan  
Culture Editor



skills to determine their compatibility with higher education. In reality, this perception is misleading; instead, a student's score is a nearly direct indicator of their socioeconomic status. Universities should stop accepting the SAT completely, due to its negative impact on less privileged students.

Studies have repeatedly shown a correlation between students' household income and their SAT scores. An article from the Harvard Gazette stated that students in the bottom 20 percent of income distribution take the test at a significantly lower rate and have a substantially lower average score. Only about 2.5 percent of low-income testers score above 1300, while 17 percent of students in the top 20 percent of income distribution score above 1300. Furthermore, children in the top one percent of earners were more than 13 times more likely to score above a 1300 than low-income students. The bottom line is

clear: children from wealthy families are much more likely to receive higher scores, while those from low-income families are left behind.

The SAT also disproportionately affects minority communities. Analysis from the Brookings Research Institution found that the average math scores of Latino and African-American students were more than 100 points lower than those of white and Asian students, and significantly lower than the average score of all test takers. The correlation between socioeconomic standing and score is undeniable, creating a discriminatory advantage for richer white and Asian test takers. It is a clearly flawed system, only widening the gap between the privileged and the underprivileged.

The SAT underrepresents disadvantaged communities, negatively impacting their access to higher education. While income influences other factors in the college admissions process, such as grade point average (GPA), it sways them less directly. GPA shows a much weaker income-to-score correlation, less than half of that of the SAT, according to Penn Wharton. The college admissions process as

a whole is deeply tied to income, but institutions cannot be complicit in letting students who deserve fair chances be tossed aside. Colleges should strive to level the playing field, not exacerbate the issue. Lower-income students have fewer opportunities

to improve their scores compared to their high-income counterparts; SAT improvement courses and private tutors can cost hundreds of dollars, and many are unable to afford them. Removing the SAT's effect on admissions would not only provide a more objective lens than many schools' current systems, but also offer more opportunities for lower-income, equally qualified candidates to flourish.

Many universities are already test-optional or test blind, not considering SAT scores. Policymakers should implement this system nationwide, as a blind admissions process accepts more qualified applicants and creates diverse campuses. Equal access to higher education and opportunities for upward social mobility create more complete societies, and a test-blind approach encourages more of both. (Sources: Brookings Institution, Gun Violence Solutions, Harvard Gazette, Harvard Public Health, Penn Wharton)



F. Banno

# Valencia argues against overpaying professional athletes

by Julia Valencia  
Opinion Editor



watching sports. It's something that my dad and I enjoy and bond over. As a Bay Area native, I have grown up cheering on the 49ers during Sunday Night Football and watching weekly San Francisco Giants baseball games.

Something that has never made sense to me, however, is the justification for the enormous amount of money the top players in each sport earn. To clarify, I am referring to and discussing athletes who play what I consider to be the big three: football, baseball, and basketball.

I have the utmost respect for these athletes. As an athlete myself, I understand, while it may be just a fraction, the effort and thousands of hours that go into trying to be the best of the best. But do I think that a football player works as hard as a single mom working three minimum wage jobs? No, I do not.

Sports teams should not be paying professional athletes millions of dollars a year to throw, kick, hit, and/or catch a ball. As a society, we need to be more conscious of where we put our money and call out those who benefit from others' losses in the broken entertainment system. Don't get me wrong, I love

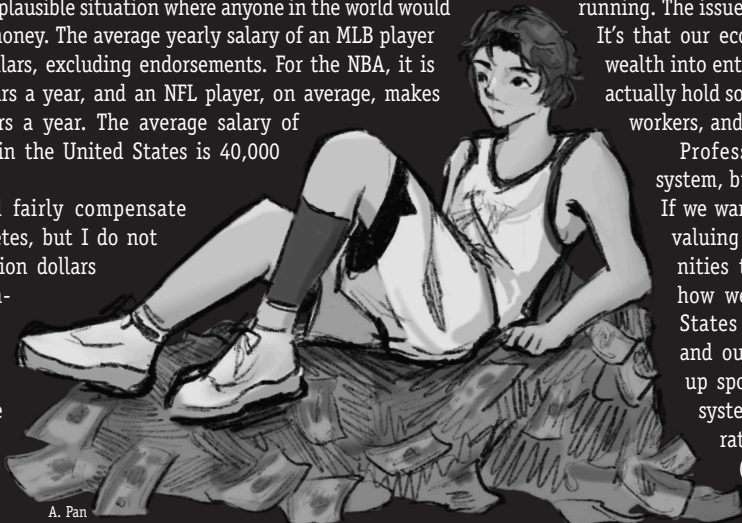
Brock Purdy signed a contract with the 49ers to play with them for five years in exchange for 265 million dollars. Shohei Ohtani signed a ten-year contract with the Los Angeles Dodgers in which they agreed to pay him just shy of 700 million dollars. While these are some of the best of the best players in the country, it is truly shocking just how much teams pay their players. I can't imagine any plausible situation where anyone in the world would need that much money. The average yearly salary of an MLB player is five million dollars, excluding endorsements. For the NBA, it is 11.9 million dollars a year, and an NFL player, on average, makes 3.2 million dollars a year. The average salary of a single person in the United States is 40,000 dollars a year.

Teams should fairly compensate professional athletes, but I do not consider 700 million dollars to be "fair" compensation. Even if sports teams reduced player salaries, the extra money wouldn't suddenly support

teachers, nurses, or single parents working multiple jobs; it would just remain in the hands of the team's billionaire owners.

To me, the money society uses to support sports is indicative of how warped our priorities have become when, as a society, we value entertainment more than the work that keeps our country running. The issue isn't just "athletes make too much." It's that our economic and cultural systems funnel wealth into entertainment over the professions that actually hold society together, like educators, health workers, and first responders.

Professional athletes didn't break the system, but they do benefit from its fractures. If we want to close the wealth gap and start valuing the people who hold our communities together, then we need to rethink how we, as fans, consumers, and United States citizens, distribute our attention and our money. That doesn't mean giving up sports, but it does mean demanding a system where "fair compensation" accurately reflects contribution to society. (Sources: ESPN, Sports Illustrated, USA Today, US Census Bureau)

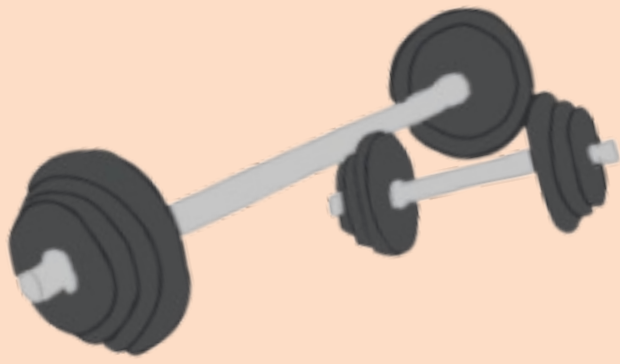


A. Pan



# Which niche en

## POST-WORKOUT EUPHORIA



Deep breath in... and deep breath out. Feel those endorphins pumping? That serene clarity after an especially hard sports practice or a hot workout keeps you coming back for more. After exerting yourself so much, the world feels simpler on your short drive home. Maybe it's time to stare off into space and appreciate the little things as you listen to the birds chirping. For a moment, your worries and pressures cease to exist, allowing you to take things slowly for once. Consider going the long way home as you relax, or maybe just be happy that you have a second to yourself.

-**Claudia Casal**, People Editor

## THIRD WHEEL AWKWARDNESS

Oh no. You've done it again. You accidentally tagged along on your friend's date. Forced to witness their acts of PDA and teenage romance, you feel an immense desire to crawl into a hole and hide for all eternity. Say hello to third-wheel awkwardness, consisting of regret and the desire to scream, "Get a room!" You might think this emotion is avoidable if none of your friends is dating. Unfortunately, you would be wrong. This cringy discomfort also emerges when two of your friends act particularly clingy and mushy. Though they may deny being in a relationship, you can't help but feel like you are intruding on a date every time the three of you hang out. The only sure-fire way to avoid third-wheel awkwardness is to avoid traveling in trios.

-**Annabelle Pan**, Graphics Editor



## INCORRECT ANSWER EMBARRASSMENT



Answering a question brutally wrong in class isn't for the weak. Even though the mitochondrion is the powerhouse of the cell, it doesn't make you the nucleus of class discussion. In fact, it does the opposite: even the teacher is laughing at you! Your table tells you that "it was just a really hard question," but you can feel yourself turning red faster than you can say the word "asymptote" in math class. Even though the class will soon forget about your academic mishap, you can't help but feel defeated like the Continental Army in 1780 after the catastrophic loss that was the Battle of Camden. Nice job putting yourself out there, but alas, the odds were not in your favor this time around.

-**Hayley Strahs**, Editor-in-Chief



# emotion are you?

## INSTAGRAM ENGAGEMENT ANXIETY

Dang it! The emotion you struggle with is Post-Traumatic Like Disorder (PTLD). In other words, the moment you post anything on Instagram, TikTok, or even your private Snapchat story, you enter an anxious paralysis, checking the likes and views every five minutes. You can forget about putting your phone away and manifesting the content to go viral. Once the doctor diagnoses you with PTLD, it's too late; the only thing left to do is to break your phone in half and throw it in a crucible. Might as well throw in your computer, your iPad, and maybe even your Apple Watch — anything you could check your socials on. Other symptoms may include upset stomach, headaches, and a deep-rooted feeling of isolation from your loyal followers. At the end of the day, all you need is a deep breath and a chai latte.

-Nelson Kramer, Editor-in-Chief



## LATE NIGHT MOTIVATION

Do you get unexplained bursts of motivation in the wee hours of the morning? If so, you are not alone. The feeling creeps up when you accomplish nothing during your waking hours. Maybe you made a sandwich or finished a TV show, but as you're laying in bed, you see your messy room, the two essays you still have to write, and the book you said you were starting a month ago. Quickly but silently, you clean up your whole room, start writing your first essay, and crack open your book. Only when you wake up in the morning with pages stuck to your face and gibberish posing as coherent sentences do you realize you should've just gone to sleep. But hey! At least you have a clean room.

-Kloe Adams, Games Creator





- Mitchell discusses the new Conan Gray album
- Wilson recaps Sabrina Carpenter album

# Hathaway recaps the new My Life with the Walter Boys season

by Quinn Hathaway  
Media Production Editor

After a two-year hiatus, Netflix dropped the sophomore season of the teenage-centered Netflix show My Life with the Walter Boys on Aug. 28. Based on the best-selling novel by Ali Novak, the Netflix adaptation features a stellar cast, including Nikki Rodriguez, Noah LaLonde, and Ashby Gentry as the golden trio. Although the cast features mostly novice actors, season one was a hit, and season two is sure to bring more drama to the screen.

The show follows sixteen-year-old protagonist Jackie Howard as she navigates a move from New York City to rural Colorado. Jackie's mother, father, and sister all passed away in a car accident, leading her to move in with her mother's best friend and her family in Silver Falls, Colorado. Living with nine kids proves difficult for Jackie, and challenges arise with every turn, particularly in the form of two boys. Cole Walter, ex-quarterback and town golden boy,

contrasts with Alex Walter, an introverted and equestrian-centered teen. Small town life proves tumultuous for the Walter family, filled with football games, drama, and relationships.



A. Pan

Rodriguez commented, "With Alex, he's so kind and loving and makes [Jackie] feel safe in this new place where she doesn't feel like she belongs. With Cole, he challenges her, and he's passionate — and a

little bit like the person you feel you shouldn't really love, so there's always that. They're very different, but it's so layered, and that's why I think it's a hard choice for Jackie. It's complicated."

The first episode of season two brings Jackie back to Silver Falls and the lives of the sprawling Walter family. Everyone appears changed from their summers apart, with Cole spending his summer in school, Jackie at an internship in New York, and Alex at an equestrian camp. While the original cast is largely intact, the show added several members. In total, five new characters joined for the second season, but the three most prominent are Natalie Sharp, Carson MacCormac, and Janet Kidder. The trio has the opportunity to stir things up in Silver Falls, for better or worse.

This new season is sure to both expand on the problems left unresolved from season one and introduce new issues to all members of the Walter family. Although the season is only ten episodes long, it's been renewed for a third season, set to release sometime in 2026. Tune in for more small-town quarrels and romance under the stars in the new season, available on Netflix starting Aug. 28.

(Sources: Netflix, People, Teen Vogue)

# Mitchell discusses new album : Wishbone

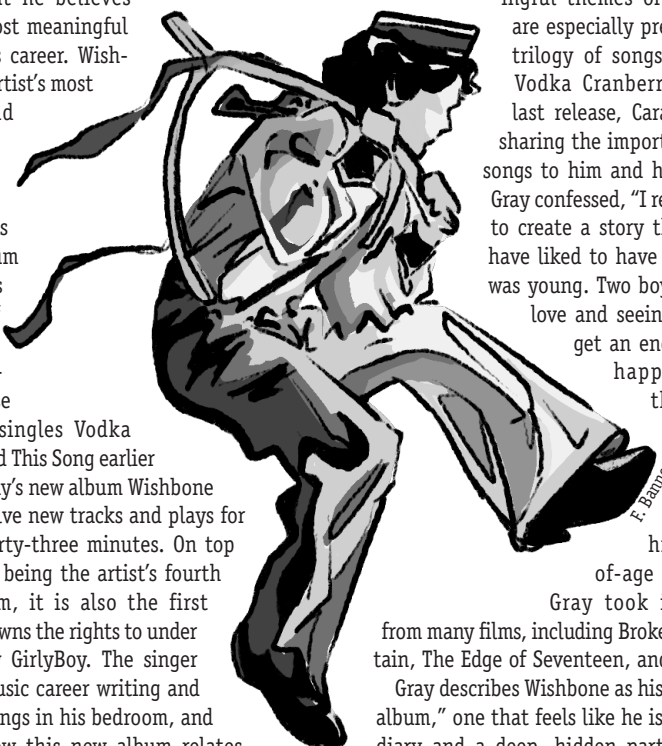
by Kayla Mitchell  
Public Relations Manager

On Aug. 15, popular music artist Conan Gray released his new album, Wishbone. In the midst of touring for his last album, the Found Heaven On Earth Tour, Gray spent several months secretly writing what he believes to be the most meaningful album of his career. Wishbone is the artist's most personal and emotional project to date, and Gray describes it as the album he always dreamed of creating.

Following the release of popular singles Vodka Cranberry and This Song earlier this year, Gray's new album Wishbone features twelve new tracks and plays for a total of forty-three minutes. On top of Wishbone being the artist's fourth studio album, it is also the first album Gray owns the rights to under his company GirlyBoy. The singer began his music career writing and producing songs in his bedroom, and cherishes how this new album relates to his journey of discovery as a teenager. When discussing the sentimentality of the new tracks and lyrics, Gray shared, "While I was writing this album, I was actively rediscovering who I am. Writing these songs so diaristically and so honestly is this very thrilling, extremely validating experience, and that's why the whole album ended up that way." The overall theme of the album is Gray's coming-of-age story, but the accompanying music videos for Wishbone focus on a queer love story between two fictional

characters, a part of himself Gray is not scared to share with his audience. Throughout the music videos, the fictional characters Wilson and Brando experience a classic romance story full of heartbreak, but eventually their journey concludes with a happy ending. The meaningful themes of the album are especially present in the trilogy of songs. This Song, Vodka Cranberry, and the last release, Caramel. When sharing the importance of the songs to him and his listeners, Gray confessed, "I really wanted to create a story that I would have liked to have had when I was young. Two boys falling in love and seeing that they get an ending that is happy. I think that's really rare." In the pursuit of creating his coming-of-age love story, Gray took inspiration from many films, including Brokeback Mountain, The Edge of Seventeen, and Lady Bird.

Gray describes Wishbone as his "wet dream album," one that feels like he is sharing his diary and a deep, hidden part of himself with his listeners. From confessions of his own flaws through songs like Class Clown to heart-wrenching love songs like Nauseous, Gray tells the story of his youth and reveals his personal struggles to his fans, offering anyone who has experienced heartbreak someone to relate to. Gray is set to tour the Wishbone Pajama Show throughout September and October this year. On Friday, Oct. 3, Gray will perform in the Bay Area at the Shoreline Amphitheater in Mountain View. (Source: Paper Magazine)



F. Brando

# Muthukrishnan reviews Starline album

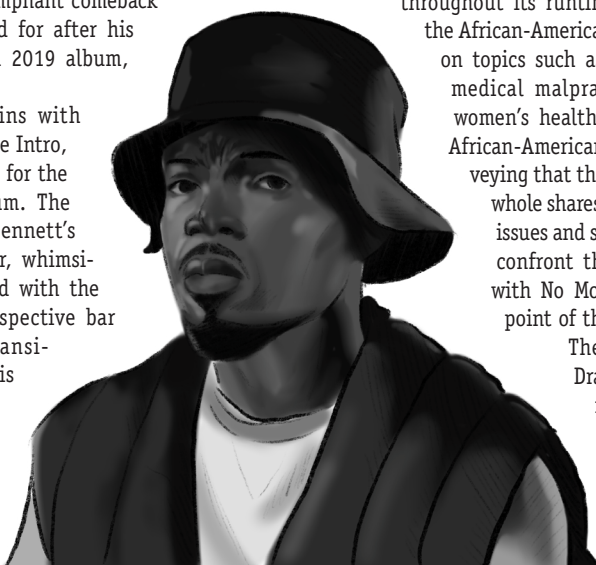
by Sahil Muthukrishnan  
Culture Editor

Grammy winner Chancelor Johnathan Bennett, professionally known as Chance the Rapper, released his long-awaited album, Starline, on Aug. 15. It is the triumphant comeback many fans hoped for after his widely criticized 2019 album, The Big Day.

Starline begins with the song Star Side Intro, setting the mood for the rest of the album. The track features Bennett's bread and butter, whimsical rhymes mixed with the occasional introspective bar and smooth transitions between his uniquely intoned vocals and his lyricism. Star Side Intro also hints at Bennett's comeback, confirming to fans that he is reintroducing himself with a bang. The track also highlights black excellence and the black experience, topics Bennett consistently explores throughout the record.

Ride, the next track, is a chill listen with a prominent melodic hook. Not to be taken seriously, it is a nice throwaway track, easy to put on without much thought for a relaxing mood.

Song three, No More Old Men, features a more serious tone and introspective lyrics about Bennett's older male role models. Jamila Woods beautifully delivers the chorus, and the song evokes a deep sense of nostalgia even in people who don't share Bennett's experience. No More Old Men is an excellent song reminiscent of some of Bennett's best tracks on Coloring Book, his project that won Rap Album of the Year in 2017.



A. Pan

The fourth track, The Negro Problem, delivers a soulful energy with smoothly delivered vocals and features anhemitonic scales, scales without harsh half-steps, giving the song an ethereal feel. Incorporating clips of Richard Pryor's stand-up comedy throughout its runtime, the track explores the African-American experience, touching on topics such as wrongful conviction, medical malpractice affecting Black women's health, and over-policing of African-American neighborhoods, conveying that the Black community as a whole shares experiences with these issues and should stand together to confront them. This track, along with No More Old Men, is a high point of the album.

The record's next song, Drapetomania, is a shocking switch from introspective to upbeat and unserious. The change is jarring, but the track is an endearing one. Bennett's lines are charismatic, keeping listeners engaged. Drapetomania is short and sweet, cutting through the two previous, meaningful songs. A return to heavier topics, Back to the Go is about Bennett's divorce and the emotional turmoil of resetting his life. It has a great groove to it, an amazing feature from Vic Mensa, and is an outstanding listen overall. Other standouts from the list include: The Highs & the Lows, which features Joey Bada\$\$ and is a phenomenal laid-back listen; the upbeat and goofy Tree, featuring Lil Wayne and Smino; and Just a Drop, with Jay Electronica, which discusses wealth, poverty, and overconsumption.

Starline is a miraculous return to form for Bennett. A quality project like this one quenches the thirst fans have been waiting more than five years to satisfy. Chance the Rapper is back and here to stay. (Source: Genius)

# EL GATO RECOMMENDS: JOURNALS, BELI, & MORE

**Calling all D1 Yappers!** If you've ever chatted a friend's ear off about your psychological theories or had a long-winded debate with an imaginary friend, you're not weird; you just need someone (or someTHING) to talk to. Behold the journal: your untrained therapist, gossip buddy, accountability partner, and catch-all for anything your brain cooks up. Whether you're an artist like Greg Heffley or a poet like me, your journal is the place for your inner expression to shine. Write down those secrets you aren't allowed to tell anyone! Draw pictures of the items on your grocery list! The possibilities are endless, and it's entirely up to you how often and how much you share with your clothbound companion. Gone are the days of boring your peers; say hello to the journaling revival!

-Hayley Strahs, Editor-in-Chief



A. Anand

**Are you utterly sick and tired of the same old restaurants,** but you can't seem to find anything new? Is the classic Yelp search not working as well as it used to? Look no further than the app Beli. Beyond just offering restaurant reviews, Beli provides personalized recommendations, creates featured lists, and allows you to share favorites with others. As a relatively new app, its options are few in smaller towns like Los Gatos, but it still offers plenty of suggestions. If you ever take a trip to a big city such as San Francisco or New York, be sure to use Beli to discover new places to eat. -Megan Saul, Editor-in-Chief

**Looking for a "healthier" alternative to my sweet treat addiction,** I happened to stumble upon the Pressed Juicery freeze. Made from only seven ingredients, this sorbet-like frozen yogurt is creamy, smooth, and not overly sweet. Your order includes three toppings, everything from chocolate chips to sliced almonds to fresh fruit, which I take full advantage of (and highly recommend you do, too). Sure, it's not quite as decadent as Dolce

Spazio's gelato, but it hits the spot and can satisfy a sweet tooth, as it has mine (for the last three days in a row). -Jordan Park, Website Manager



A. Pan

also provides a fun activity for you and your friends to do together as you reflect upon your past, present, and future.

-Sam Gruetter, Editor-in-Chief



# Carpenter releases new album Man’s Best Friend

by **Chloe Wilson**  
*Culture Editor*

With the release of her seventh studio album, Man’s Best Friend, on Aug. 29, two-time Grammy-winning artist Sabrina Carpenter has charmed the music industry again with her new retro-pop songs. Carpenter released the single, Manchild, before the album, and it has already reached 300 million streams and debuted at number one on the Billboard Hot 100 chart.

Carpenter has wowed her fans for over ten years with her clever wordplay and versatility. The album centers around comedy, using a mix of various insults towards men, hence the mocking title Man’s Best Friend. Carpenter wrote the tracks with her co-writers Jack Antonoff, Amy Allen, and John Ryan.

Throughout this album, Carpenter and her writers attained a perfect balance of comedy and pop that will make anyone listening smile. One of the songs, Tears,



already has a music video to accompany it, featuring award-winning actor Coleman Domingo. In the video, Carpenter arrives at a house, and a variety of characters in elaborate outfits greet her.

With the album featuring R-rated lyrics, Carpenter acknowledged in an interview with CBS Mornings: “There will be pearl clutching, but I also think that even pearl clutchers can listen to an album like that in their own solitude and find something that makes them smirk and chuckle to themselves.” This is presumably in response to some viewers’ reactions to Manchild, the first song on Man’s Best Friend, and the album’s controversial cover. She defended this in an interview with Zane Lowe by saying, “The

whole purpose of the photo was to be cheeky, airy, and playful.” Clearly, Carpenter is not opposed to ruffling some feathers and using her wit to create controversial but lovable songs, album covers, and music videos. The main debate surrounding the album has been its degrading nature towards women. Carpenter laughs at heartbreak, which makes light of situations that many of her fans can relate to. She pointed out, “It kind of sounds like women speaking to each other because it is women speaking to each other.” Additionally, she shared that listening to the album in order presents a story and constitutes the stages of a relationship.

The album achieved over 65 million streams globally on its first day, setting a record for the biggest debut by a female artist in 2025. Carpenter explains that she can’t believe it. Though the artist is be used to setting many records in the music industry, this accomplishment is a great honor, especially after describing that she “wrote Manchild on a random Tuesday shortly after finishing Short n’ Sweet.” Carpenter is on tour currently for her Short n’ Sheet album and has not yet released tour dates for her Manchild tour. The Short n’ Sweet tour was completely sold out, and the artist additionally performed at various music festivals such as Outside Lands in San Francisco.

(Sources: Billboard, Deadline, NPR, Variety)

## Judge Caprio passes away from cancer

by **Tori Schubert**  
*People Editor*

Beloved judge and star of his own reality television show, Frank Caprio passed away on Aug. 20, following a difficult battle with pancreatic cancer. Since his diagnosis in November 2023, Caprio has been in and out of hospitals and treatments, while still maintaining a connection with his social media audience. Caprio endured five radiation treatments throughout his illness, as well as six months of chemotherapy. Although his health declined once again, shortly before his death, Caprio maintained a few months of good health after his final radiation treatment and rang the bell of healing at his hospital in May 2024. Mere hours before his death, Caprio posted a video, requesting prayers and assuring his followers he would continue fighting. His kind attitude, despite his conditions, was a perfect embodiment of the values Caprio exemplified throughout his career and lifetime.

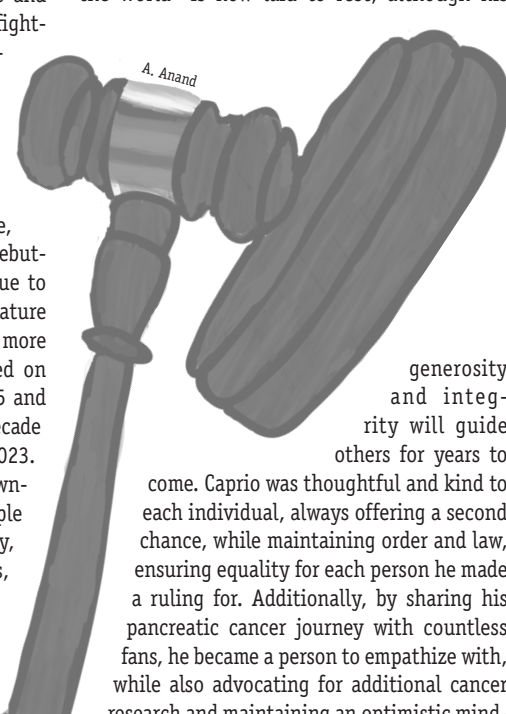
Recognized nationwide for his duties as a judge, Caprio attained his popularity through his TV series, Caught in Providence, which depicted Caprio’s many court cases, debuting in 2000. The TV show became a hit due to Caprio’s compassionate yet authoritative nature toward his defendants and appeared across more than 200 television stations. Caprio served on the Providence Municipal Court since 1985 and was approaching the end of his fourth decade as chief judge when he retired in January 2023. He connected with his audience as a down-to-earth official, understanding when people make honest mistakes and offering mercy, while maintaining realistic consequences, sparking the audience’s affection.

The state held an honorable funeral ceremony for the judge, where countless fans, friends, and family members, accompanied by the Archbishop of Boston, Richard Henning, gathered for mass at the Cathedral of St. Peter and Paul. The Rhode Island state funeral ritual included a procession through Caprio’s place of birth, Atwell Avenue, and his burial in St. Ann Cemetery in Cranston.

Although many paid tribute throughout the service, the family held the burial privately with only relatives and close friends attending.

Caprio’s death did not pass in vain, and he was soon met with a variety of social media responses and statewide tributes. Governor Mckee of Rhode Island ordered all state flags be lowered to half mass to honor the judge, remembering him as “a symbol of empathy.” Additional representatives gathered to speak on the issue, with Khalil Joseph Shekarchi, member of the Rhode Island House of Representatives. When speaking at the White House, Shekarchi referred to the judge as a “legendary” individual, “beloved by Rhode Islanders and worldwide fans.”

The nationwide-deemed “Nicest Judge in the World” is now laid to rest, although his



generosity and integrity will guide others for years to come. Caprio was thoughtful and kind to each individual, always offering a second chance, while maintaining order and law, ensuring equality for each person he made a ruling for. Additionally, by sharing his pancreatic cancer journey with countless fans, he became a person to empathize with, while also advocating for additional cancer research and maintaining an optimistic mindset. Caprio offered hope to any who crossed paths with him, virtually or in real life, and his absence will be missed online, on television, and in his legendary courtroom.

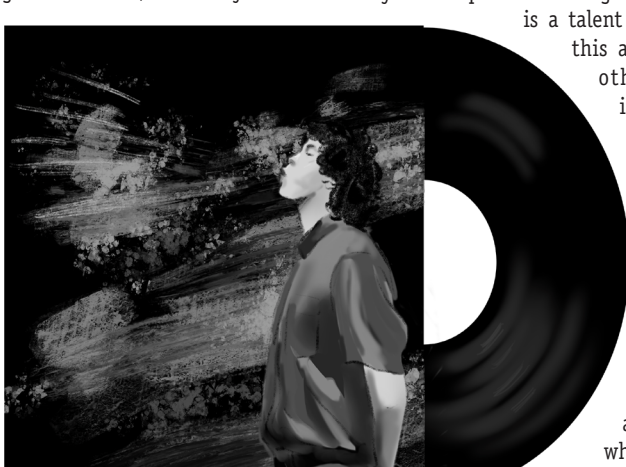
(Sources: ABC, NBC, PBS WPRI)

## Fike drops new project Rocket

by **Jane Wilde**  
*Humor Editor*

On Aug. 22, Dominic Fike released his fourth studio album, Rocket. The 29-year-old singer and Euphoria star launched his career after signing with Columbia Records in 2018 and has since then gained over eighteen million monthly listeners on Spotify alone. Fike discusses the effects of this fame throughout his new, relatively short album, which spans around 24 minutes in total. However, its short duration did not deter Fike from making it a meaningful and memorable record, as he reflects on personal topics such as fatherhood, addiction, and the pressures of fame. With over five million streams on just one track already, it’s safe to say that Fike’s “Rocket” is taking off.

Fike released the first three tracks of the record in an extended play, bluntly titled These Are the First Three Tracks of My Album. Track one, All Hands on Deck, is a solemn, hard-hitting song that covers the negative effects of fame and its interactions with fatherhood. Additionally, 500 Dollar Fine, track seven, is a classic upbeat Dominic Fike song. The song includes a catchy chorus with various layered background vocals, displaying Fike’s producing abilities. The danceable track also covers fatherhood and how it interacts with his love life. Track two, Aftermath, piggybacks off that same idea, discussing the inauthenticity of Hollywood and the challenges that Fike has encountered navigating fame while trying to maintain his own individuality. If you’re looking for a song with the ability to completely transform



your mood, track four, Sandman, is a must-listen. This song leans towards an upbeat vibe and encapsulates exactly what a summer day feels like. Fike is an interesting case in that he is both a singer and a rapper, although he is often confined to the label of “singer.” Upset and Aggressive showcases Fike’s rapping skills and his ability to effortlessly blend his rapping with indie pop-adjacent choruses. His ability to incorporate several genres into one song is a talent in itself, setting this album apart from other competitors in his field.

Fike concludes the album with the track Epilogue, where he reflects on the growth of his emotional intelligence over the years and the overwhelming impact of fatherhood. The song merges bedroom pop with a classic lofi beat. Epilogue ends the album on an insightful note, inviting the audience not just to enjoy, but to think.

Overall, the album is comparatively mellow compared to his usual discography. With this genre dominating the record, in comparison to his other albums, Rocket is mildly underwhelming in terms of upbeat melodies. However, this shouldn’t be overlooked because of the sheer quality of his previous albums (Sunburn went platinum in my household). Fike’s tone throughout the record transitions from indie pop, alternative, and hip hop seamlessly, while also incorporating rock guitar riffs. This record showcases bedroom pop’s gradual transition into rock while maintaining a calm sound. Through his versatile style and ability to convey a captivating story within his music, Rocket is a solid album for any listener who’s looking for a chill vibe.

(Sources: Apple Music, Earmilk, Genius)

## Prime Original The Runarounds is the perfect binge

by **Jordan Park**  
*Website Manager*

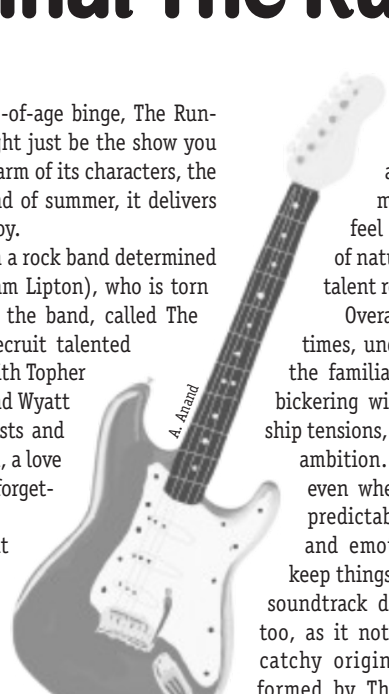
If you’re searching for your next coming-of-age binge, The Runarounds, now streaming on Prime Video, might just be the show you didn’t know you needed. Leaning into the charm of its characters, the beauty of its setting, and the bittersweet end of summer, it delivers a story that’s as easy to watch as it is to enjoy.

Fresh out of high school, five friends form a rock band determined to make it big. Led by Charlie Cooper (William Lipton), who is torn between college and his passion for music, the band, called The Runarounds, gains popularity when they recruit talented drummer Bez Willis (Zendé Murdock), along with Topher Park (Jeremy Yun), Neil Crosby (Axel Ellis), and Wyatt Wysong (Jesse Goliher), who are all guitarists and vocalists. Thrown into the mix is family drama, a love triangle, some killer performances, and the unforgettable highs and lows of growing up.

Created by the same people who brought you Outer Banks, The Runarounds has a similar feel, with a sun-drenched setting, high-energy pacing, and storylines that balance heartfelt emotion with just the right amount of drama. One thing that creator Jonas Pate excels at is casting up-and-coming actors,

which he continued to do in this show. Most of the cast had very little, if any, professional acting experience before stepping into these roles, giving the series a raw authenticity. The actors are also real musicians, so their performances on screen feel genuine rather than staged, and the mix of natural chemistry, musical passion, and fresh talent results in a widely entertaining dynamic.

Overall, the show is light-hearted and, at times, undeniably a little cheesy. It leans on the familiar tropes of high school crushes, bickering with parents, friendship tensions, and music-fueled ambition. I will say that even when a scene feels predictable, the energy and emotion behind it keep things engaging. The soundtrack deserves credit, too, as it not only features catchy original music performed by The Runarounds; it’s also paired with indie tracks



from artists like Dr. Dog, Grouplove, and Royal Otis. I always appreciate a well-placed and carefully chosen song, like when Dr. Dog’s Where’d All the Time Go? started playing during the classic high school graduation moment when the valedictorian gives their speech and everyone is in their cap and gown (as a senior, this scene definitely got to me). Set in Wilmington, North Carolina, the show also makes the most of its coastal backdrop, creating a setting that naturally complements the storyline and makes for breathtaking scenes.

It’s not Oscar material, and it certainly isn’t flawless, but it doesn’t have to be. With its lively performances and easy-going charm, this Prime Video original is the kind of show you’ll want to run through in a rainy weekend or two.

(Source: LA Times)



- Gruetter reflects on goat adventure
- Singhal critiques Performative Males

# HUMOR

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## Gloege details experience with neighbor’s dog

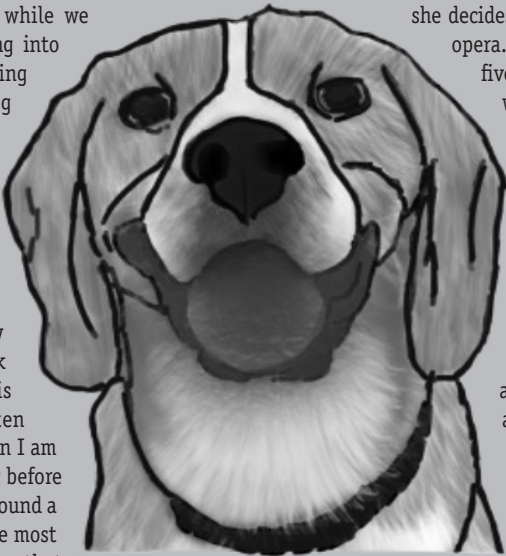
by Noah Gloege  
*World Editor*

Have you ever been in the middle of a cram session or a job interview and your neighbor’s dog starts howling outside your door? Well, I have. For context, this dog’s name is Luna, and it belongs to a retired neighbor. I personally love dogs and find this particular canine to be especially adorable. The only downside to this is that she has almost always decided that her best use of time is to run all the way to my house. She then proceeds to somehow sneak past my fence, then release a terrifying, ear-grating screech. And it’s not one of those really cute barks, no, no, no. It is genuinely one of those barks that, if you are not expecting it, can actually make you check to see if the full moon is out. It is a bit early for Halloween, but we will let it slide.

The constant bombardment of barks and terror towards my window has become such a big part of my day, I now almost wait for her to arrive. Luna has recently also started to terrorize my older dog. My older dog is really calm about life; she doesn’t really care about anything, except when Luna comes and tries to terrorize her. Luna has this idea that she wants to be the number one, and with my older dog getting the love, she has grown quite jealous. To change this, she has started to absolutely annoy me, what some would call ragebait. She has done this in numerous ways, like

running up behind us while we are walking, and turning into an F1 driver and zooming around us and jumping on us. She somehow manages to still make this really adorable. I just think my older dog is kinda losing it at her.

For those of you who are wondering why we cannot walk her back home, it’s because this dog has somehow gotten faster than my WiFi when I am trying to load something before a due date. She has also found a way to do this during the most pressing of times, whether that is my trying to keep a straight face during my job interview, or while I am on FaceTime with some friends who cannot stop laughing about Luna. Anytime I am in the midst of something important,



A. Anand

she decides that it is the best moment to treat it like she’s in the opera. At this point, it’s personal. She has to run past four or five houses to get to my place, and it is not easy to access without opening the gate. Like, why is she going after my place? Why my porch? Whenever I walk out there to try to chase her off, it usually ends with her either running away or going absolutely crazy when she sees me. The other day, she just appeared on the top floor of my house. Not once, not twice, but three separate times in one day.

This has almost become a daily routine, as nearly every day she runs down the street to essentially cliff dive down to my house. Sometimes she suddenly appears while I am outside of my place, we end up having a staring contest that well... I always lose. At this point, I have stopped asking questions; it’s just become a daily routine. I swear, she must think that she is Tom Cruise from Mission Impossible, doing her own stunts. At least she is extremely adorable, just please, Luna, maybe don’t bark and howl up a storm the next time I have an interview? At the end of the day, I cannot help but laugh. Sure, her timing could use a lot of work, but at the same time, it’s become a big part of my day.

## Ambekar critiques ice-cream cake

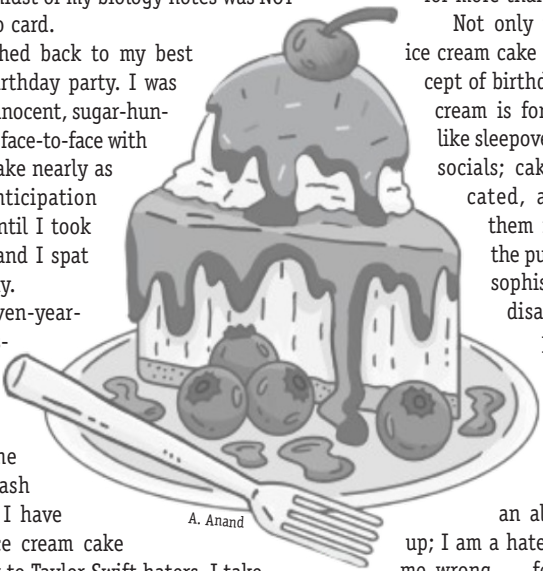
by Tanvi Ambekar  
*Opinion Editor*

When I first learned that the global ice cream cake market was valued at 2.8 billion dollars in 2024, you could say I was surprised. Reliving a traumatic birthday party experience from eight years ago in the midst of my biology notes was NOT on my 2025 bingo card.

My mind flashed back to my best friend’s eighth birthday party. I was seven years old, innocent, sugar-hungry, and suddenly face-to-face with a neon blue ice cake nearly as tall as I. The anticipation built and built until I took my first bite — and I spat it out immediately.

The other seven-year-olds began whispering among themselves as I dumped my plate abruptly into the Tiana-themed trash can. Since then, I have been a devout ice cream cake hater, and similar to Taylor Swift haters, I take pride in the fact my radical opinions make me better than everyone else. However, as you will see, my opinions are actually justified. Brace yourself, because after this, you’ll never trust a glow-in-the-dark dessert again.

First off, let’s talk about how offensive the concept of ice cream cake is to desserts in general. I consider ice cream cake enjoyers to be the ultimate couch potatoes: a mount of nothingness wasting away in front of a droning TV. They can’t even be bothered to appreciate the beauty of soft, moist cake and creamy, cold ice cream separately. These



A. Anand

criminals are so determined to commit a dessert felony that they convince themselves it’s actually enjoyable. It becomes a soggy milkshake after 30 minutes anyway; “enjoyers” sacrifice the uniqueness of each dessert just to contemplate a bowl of soggy milkshake-soup if their cake is left outside for more than five minutes.

Not only that, but the concept of ice cream cake takes away from the concept of birthday parties as a whole. Ice cream is for casual, low-level events like sleepovers and awkward ice cream socials; cake is dignified, sophisticated, and revered. Combining them into one dessert removes the purpose of both; the fun and sophistication of both desserts disappear. Each one has its place in society, so let’s not try to force them into a setting where they don’t thrive.

And for your information, no, I will NOT be an almond mom when I grow up; I am a hater of those well. Don’t get me wrong — feeding your kids nuclear waste is usually okay, but I draw the line when you take two perfectly good desserts and smash them into something with the worst qualities of both.

Now, typically, I would end with a compassionate thought for the people who disagree, but I firmly believe that this article can prevent the crime against humanity that is ice cream cake. So please, heed my warning and do not consume this failed mosaic of desserts. For it may bring short-term joy, but with a cost: the knowledge that you are actively contributing to the downfall of dessert society.

## Gruetter relives ordeal with goats

by Sam Gruetter  
*Editor-in-Chief*

I have new neighbors. They eat everything in sight, make noise at all hours of the day, and bother me constantly. No, it is not my sister back from college. The people next door have resorted to goat labor to solve the weed problem that ravages our neighborhood. This couple, who apparently have way too much disposable income, have hired a gaggle of goats to come and eat the underbrush on their property and the surrounding area; however, it slipped their mind to notify the neighborhood that our places of residence were about to transform into a petting zoo. Imagine my shock when, on a regular Tuesday morning, I drive down my street to go to school, and several goats visually accost me! I initially thought that this must be a jail-break from some zoo, and I was all for it, PETA and whatnot, but my mother soon notified me that these goats were not criminal escapees, but rather paid laborers. You mean somebody exchanged the US dollar, several Big B’s (short for Ben Franklin), for some animals to frolic and eat. I was immediately offended. Why was I not considered for such a position?

A few days after the goats wormed their way into the neighborhood and, admittedly, my heart, my residence received an invitation to a goat-watching party. What is this? The Hunger Games? Is the hard work my furry friends are enduring every day some form of sick entertainment for you soulless kooks? Do you think your



F. Banno

underbrush eats itself? Why don’t we just throw them into the colosseum and make them fight to the death? Anyways, I went, but made sure everybody present knew I did NOT support this oligarchic lifestyle and that I was vehemently team goat. What is a goat-watching party, you may ask? Well, we sat and watched the goats eat dead stuff for two hours; it was both exhilarating and captivating. I cheered on my goats louder than a mom cheering on her son on the football field (who rides the bench every game). Safe to say, I have not received another invitation to any more laboring mammal parties and will likely not.

However, my new friends’ time with us was limited, as there was only so much brush to consume, and the forest from which I had been stealing brush to prolong the goats’ stay was running low as well. When I saw the herders packing the goats into cages and loading them into a moving truck, I had such a visceral reaction that it required sedation. Apologies to the goat shepherd whose stick-thing I tried to run off with in my medicated state. Completely unrelated to my prior confession, but guess who is going as Little Bo Peep this Halloween? When the goats left, I resolved to get them back. Upon visiting Hiregoats.com and seeing the outrageous prices for goat labor, I realized that I may just have to endure my tremendous loss and wait for that random Tuesday when I round the corner to my house and the goats are back.

## Wilde reviews season three of The Summer I Turned Pretty

by Jane Wilde  
*Humor Editor*

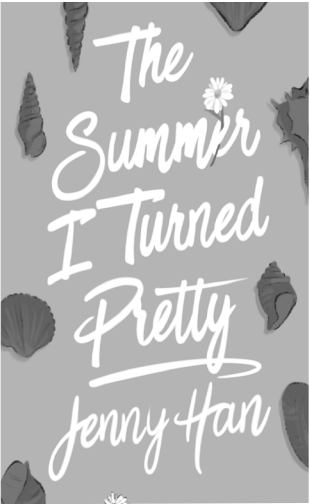
**Warning: Spoilers ahead for The Summer I Turned Pretty.**

I’m a sucker for bad shows. My philosophy is, if it won an award, I won’t watch it. Emmys are for wannabe artsy filmmakers who want to make “good” shows. Who wants a good show?! I’d much rather endure three seasons of fast paced rubbish that make me want to throw my remote at the TV. So, you could assume that when I found Prime Video’s The Summer I Turned Pretty, I was hooked. I don’t consider myself a fan, but more as a captive. No matter how excruciatingly cringy the episode is, I always find myself thinking “same time next week?”

The show follows Belly (short for Isabella, because for some reason Belly is a better choice than Izzy), a young girl from Pennsylvania, and her infatuation with two brothers (Conrad and Jeremiah) whom she has known her whole life. After the brothers’ mom dies from cancer, the first thought that occurs to Belly is “how can I make this about myself?” She’s given two choices: be with the super senior in credit card debt, or date the well-accomplished doctor at Stanford. Take a wild guess who she picked. If you guessed the raging manchild in debt, unfortunately, you’d be correct. I swear there’s never been a protagonist harder to root for than Belly Conklin. She makes decisions as if she’s in a training camp for reality TV stars and then cries about them for half an episode. God forbid the consequences of her own actions exist.

In the latest season, Belly and Jeremiah get engaged in their early 20s. When Belly shows off her ring, the size of a dust particle, to their families, they are rightfully against the wedding. This becomes the first main conflict of the show. It’s such a fixable problem, I just couldn’t stay invested in the plot. Just wait a few years to get married?? To top it all off, Jeremiah is a literal joke. He looks as if Belly wished her doll to life, like an uncanny Snapchat filter and a Bang energy drink ambassador all in one. Not to mention that buddy thinks he is the chocolate connoisseur, Willy Wonka himself. When Belly couldn’t afford a three tier chocolate cake with strawberry glaze for the wedding, Jeremiah lost his marbles because he insisted “the cacao is the bean.”

The wedding was an obvious mistake, but I swear I could smell the red flags from episodes away. For starters, Jeremiah cheated on her, and then directly after she found out, he got down on one knee and proposed. Yet, when Conrad is



A. Pan

emotionally unavailable because his mom is dying of cancer, Belly calls him heartless. The math is not mathing. I’m at a point in the show where I equally despise Belly and Jeremiah, so honestly, they deserve each other.

DO NOT get me started on the overly specific soundtrack choices. I won’t lie; the soundtrack takes quite the budget, featuring artists like Ariana Grande and Charli XCX. Episode 9 made it evident where the money is coming from, considering the whole thing was a shameless product placement ad for Apple’s AirTag. The writers need to understand that no one wants to hear Snow on the Beach by Taylor Swift when it starts snowing on the beach or Lacy by Olivia Rodrigo when she finds out Jeremiah cheated on her with a girl named Lacy. Something about it makes me cringe every time.

I know I’m being contradictory, and you’re probably wondering if I even like the show. The hard truth is, despite the questionable dialogue and painfully bad decision-making, I’m addicted. As invested as I am in seeing if she chooses Conrad or Jereimiah, I have a strong feeling she is going to choose self-love. I’m all for a progressive moment, but if Belly chooses herself after all of this, I’m filing a class-action lawsuit.



# Littfin recaps JoJo Siwa's summer activities

by **Kat Littfin**  
*Editorial Editor*

As a JoJo Siwa aficionado and the self-proclaimed El Gato Siwa correspondent, I am excited to share that the pop star continued her eccentric antics and rage-baiting behaviors over the summer while LGHS was on break. I am a hate-watcher when it comes to JoJo Siwa, but her recent plays have frankly left me speechless and confused. I have even considered blocking her, but am so glad that I didn't; how else could I continue to update the masses about the former Dance Moms star and child entertainer turned "bad-girl" that no one needs to know about?

Siwa's most meme-able moments are from her clearly performative bad girl era. If you are unfamiliar with said era (do you live under a rock?), drop everything, go to YouTube, and watch her music video for Karma, her magnum opus. Now go look up her recent cover of Bette Davis Eyes and tell me that her bad girl arc was not performative. Once a self-proclaimed rebel, Siwa has changed her aesthetic into a pseudo-trad wife and watered-down version of her former self. Her shift has given me whiplash, but it has a story behind it, full of the cringe and controversy fans and haters know Siwa for.

It all started when UK Celebrity Big Brother announced that

she would be a contestant on the show. "Celebrity" is a strong word to describe JoJo Siwa. But, I'll be honest, I couldn't name the majority of the so-called "celebrities" on the show anyway. You would think that Siwa would learn to avoid reality television after her traumatic Dance Moms years. In the words of her former mentor, Abby Lee Miller, I ask Siwa: "JoJo! Have you learned nothing?"

While on the show, Siwa grew closer to former Love Islander Chris Hughes. Although from afar, this friendship turned situationship turned relationship seems wholesome, it has many cringey layers, just like many of Siwa's music videos. The pair has a ten-year difference between them. While



Hughes was finding "love" on his season of Love Island, Siwa was wearing neon bows and singing about being "a kid in a candy store." Generally, if someone is in a relationship, it is common courtesy not to pursue other partners. Siwa clearly does not have that courtesy, as she was dating Australian influencer Kath Ebbs while on Big Brother. Siwa also stated several times that she was a lesbian, even calling herself the C.E.O. of gay pop (as if she could not get even more delusional), so proceeding to date a man after building a platform off of the queer community was a bit of a surprise. This was especially the case when, after officially announcing her relationship with Hughes, Siwa denied ever claiming to be a lesbian and adopted a whole new persona, donning more neutral colors, the occasional red lip (ok, Marilyn Monroe wannabe), and telling people to call her Joelle.

JoJo Siwa will not escape her past (just like she will never escape the demonic force of Abby Lee Miller) with a simple name change and a new partner. At least Siwa connoisseurs like me will always remember her rainbow-clad, Claire's shopping, pop-star era and her attempt at being a bad girl in a rhinestone-covered Gene Simmons costume, talking about the dream guest on her podcast.

## A. SINGHAL CRITIQUES PERFORMATISM

by **Arnav Singhal**  
*Sports Editor*

The Performative Male —part philosopher, part feminist, part walking Instagram Reel—is walking in the wild, clutching his matcha in his left hand and a copy of Little Women in his right. He has his AirPods plugged in, listening to Beabadoobee. He goes by many names and comes in different styles, each one handcrafted with an Instagram archetype. There's the nonchalant kind, draped in baggy hoodies, Chrome Hearts wallet chains, and Birkenstocks. Or you may run into the "Self Help" variety who burns sage and gets up at 5 AM every day to go to the gym. The Performative Male crafts each of his personas with the intention of fooling his prey and sinking his painted nails into their DMs. Once a flannel-wearing, ax-swinging male, he has transformed into the matcha-loving feminist we stroll past today. He uses each of his props to manufacture every aspect of his newly developed personality.

**Every Sip an Audition:** Matcha is the go-to beverage popping up in cafés across the nation, a creamy blend of lush green tea with a subtle hint of umami. It's not just a drink but a performance, an embodiment of journaling at sunrise. It complements a mysterious personality, fosters mindfulness, and radiates clean energy. Cafes are the Performative Male's natural habitat, where he is strongest. Once, black coffee stood in a chipped mug; now matcha has taken its place, displayed in a crisp ceramic cup. Every sip is a pose, an approach, an aesthetic, and an audition.

graphics F. Banno

**Try-Hard Tunes:** Previously a pathway that meant personal expression, music has transformed into a method of faking connection. The Performative Male's playlists are scattered among modern-indie pop artists: Beabadoobee, Clairo, and Laufey; each track is handpicked not to be felt, but rather to be seen as an affirmation of authenticity and faux sensitivity. Though he pretends to be in his feels, when he returns home, he immediately plays Kanye West.

**The Bookworm's Facade:** Literature used to be dense philosophy and dusty novels; now it is streamlined into digestible mantras on the internet. He references pop psychology books daily, plagiarizing TikTok summaries to enhance his carefully staged facade of self-improvement. His collection isn't confined to books like Atomic Habits; he often puts on a show of reading authors like Margaret Atwood, Virginia Woolf, and Mary Wollstonecraft.

Using matcha, music, and literature, the performative male fashions himself into the self-help-obsessed, mysterious, sensitive male he longs to be. Through his instant social media popularity across platforms like Instagram and TikTok, the performative male has secured his spot in the Modern Pop Culture Hall of Fame right alongside the VSCO Girls, Finance Bros, and the guy who thinks owning one pair of Jordans makes him a sneakerhead.

## Banna talks Labubu phenomenon

by **Fuyu Banno**  
*Graphics Editor*

Labubu. You see it constantly on your TikTok for-you-page, and you may even dream of owning one yourself. For me, a Labubu isn't just a dream; it became my reality when a family member gifted me one. There it stood in my room in all its fluffy glory with dragon teeth and eyes like those of an AI-generated dancing cat. Unlike other ordinary keychains, this Labubu disturbed me to my very soul. I actually have to hide it in my closet at night.

I then realized the reason behind my fear wasn't the keychain itself; it was the responsibilities of owning a Labubu. This serious weight on my shoulders was something of grave importance that I had to sort out before the burden of owning a Labubu crushed me into oblivion. Labubus were not here to play.

One morning, I realized what this gnawing encumbrance that had me in its hold truly was: it was the great powers I now possessed by owning a Labubu. This keychain opened the door of my path toward popularity.

Alas, it becomes more and more difficult each day to start a decent conversation. Speaking face-to-face is now almost a rarity when anyone can open up ChatGPT to spill out their guts or rant to a chat bot about the misery of AP European History. No longer can you start a conversation with "How's it going?" or "What are

you doing this weekend?" Instead, I advise you to say: "Guess what? I have a Labubu!" All of a sudden, all eyes are going to be on you. You will be in the spotlight like never before. Remember, the average commoner has never laid eyes upon this expensive piece of plastic. It is the Gen Z equivalent of finding the holy grail. But it is never good to lie. For this phrase to work, you must, in fact, own a Labubu.

I'll admit, when I first became a Labubu proprietor, my initial response was defeat. I felt completely and utterly humbled. Why, do you ask? I was now part of the community that I had so ruthlessly criticized months before the fluffy monster came into my possession. I made fun of the people who spent hundreds of dollars on Labubu blind boxes and called Labubu the pinnacle of human overconsumption. Now looking back, perhaps it was a feeling of jealousy that I would never become part of the clique of sophisticated human beings whose popularity and personality depended upon an overly marketed shrine to materialism.

In my new-found popularity, it seemed like nothing was impossible. Yet, people say all good things come to an end, and it was true for the Labubu, too. I knew it was over when I heard two millennials talking about the then-Gen Z token. No longer were Labubus cool; they had been co-opted by old people. I had enjoyed my Labubu fever, and now it was time to move on to the next trend.

# S. SINGHAL GIVES ADVICE ON BACK TO SCHOOL ICEBREAKERS

by **Siyona Singhal**  
*Humor Editor*

As school is starting again, every student endures the same thing in each class: icebreakers. These dreaded "getting to know each other" games have only caused anxiety and embarrassment for me. What if I don't have a fact that's fun about me? What if I don't know what to bring to a hypothetical picnic? I have stuttered in front of my whole class far too many times. In my opinion, icebreakers need a real upgrade, and I have some ideas.

First, I don't care what your favorite ice cream flavor is; I want to know what your favorite childhood show was. This can reveal a great deal about someone. If they watched shows like Sid the Science Kid or The Magic School Bus, they were total nerds. If they watched Wild Kratts or Odd Squad, they loved adventure. Yo Gabba Gabba meant dancing. Sesame Street meant friends.

Next, I need to know what you think the most significant pop

culture moment is. This question determines who I'll befriend and who I won't. In today's day and age, enjoying the same pop culture moments is vital to a successful relationship. If someone doesn't know the classic Tanka Jahari meme from Impractical Jokers, our friendship just won't work. On the other hand, if a fellow classmate recognizes the lyrics Don't stop, get it, get it, we're going to get along great. Other acceptable answers include the hyperpigmentation meme, Mama, a girl behind you, Justin Bieber's passion for clocks, and gymnastic superstar Benson Boone's hit song Moonbeam Ice Cream.

People say icebreakers are a waste of time, but hear me out. Everyone shares the closest they've come to the



deadline of an assignment before submitting it. You'll learn who to group up with and who not to. Steer clear of those who say anything less than 20 minutes, but make sure to grab people who say anything greater than 24 hours. This icebreaker is not only fun, but it will help you map out the optimal group for a project. Never again will you regret picking someone who you thought would be a great partner, but dumped all the work on you. Thank me later.

If you're not interested in doing an icebreaker to get to know someone, I understand that. I have some simple questions that you can ask to reveal red flags in a person. Have they seen K-Pop Demon Hunters? If they have not, sprint in the other direction. Do they like Labubus? If they are avid collectors of these demonic keychains, don't get too close to them. Do they like chocolate or vanilla? Dogs or cats? Who's their favorite girl on Dance Moms? Well, maybe that last one is the only one I care to hear.

The first few weeks of school can be challenging, but I hope these new, refurbished icebreaker ideas will make those weeks a little easier. You won't have to waste time brainstorming facts to make yourself seem interesting or come up with lies and truths. After these reinvented icebreaker suggestions, I have no doubt you'll be able to make strong connections with your new classmates.



- Miletich launches new song
- Gao excels in rock climbing

# PEOPLE

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## CLARKE CHASES HIS MANY PASSIONS ON THE FOOTBALL FIELD, CLASSROOM, AND COURTROOM

by Fuyu Banno and Siyona Singhal  
*Graphics and Humor Editors*

With his great of for all things history, dedication to football, and knack for a good argument, junior **Max Clarke** has started the year strong.

For his junior year, Clarke is taking on a heavy course load, including four AP classes: AP Calculus AB, AP US History, AP English Language and Composition, and AP Physics 1. He is also taking Graphic Design and Spanish 3. Of these classes, Clarke enjoys AP US History the most, commenting, “I really like history. It’s always been something that I’m passionate about. I think the stuff that’s gonna be the most fun to learn about is the stuff I don’t know yet.”



Clarke’s fervor for knowledge transcends the boundaries of the classroom and manifests itself onto the football field. As a safety for the LGHS Varsity Football team, Clarke’s contact with the sport began after his parents took him to a game at Candlestick Park when he was four years old. Although Clarke does not remember much of what occurred, he mentioned how the 2019 Superbowl was what really got him interested in the sport. From there, his interest in football continued to grow, leading to his wanting to know more about the gameplay. Clarke connects football back to his interest in history, as he explained, “I kind of realized where everything ties into history in some way, like tying it back to football. I’ve learned a bunch because I wanted to know more about the history of football.” When he entered high school, Clarke realized he could be more than a mere spectator and became part of the sport that he deeply admired. Now, Clarke is an important asset to the varsity football team.

Not only can you find Clarke on the field, you can also spot him in the courtroom. Clarke joined the LGHS Mock Trial Club in his sophomore year after a friend recommended it to him. He reminisced about last year’s season: “I had a lot of fun, and it was really cool to compete. Even though our season ended a little sooner than it should

have, it was still a really rewarding experience, and I’m excited to be back this year doing it again.” Clarke’s favorite part of mock trial is the garb, despite how he described dressing up as “kind of surface-level.” He added, “Anytime there’s an opportunity to dress nice and go somewhere with a bunch of friends, it’s a good time.”

In the future, Clarke hopes to become an engineer, specifically in aerospace. His grandfather, who was an engineer as well, sparked Clarke’s love for the career: “As a kid, he would take me into his office and teach me all sorts of things about math.” His dream college is the University of Washington in Seattle because, as he explained, “I have visited the campus and the city. It’s been one of my favorite places I’ve ever been to.” As he’s thinking about graduating, Clarke’s parting words of wisdom are to “explore your options and be open to new things. High school is when so many opportunities open up to you, and you can really find out what you’re passionate about.”

Whether he’s on the football field, in the history classroom, or in the courtroom, Clarke puts his full effort and passion into whatever he does. His determination and commitment make him a strong presence in high school and beyond.



## Miletich pursues career as singer with new single

by Tanya Chang  
*Sports Editor*

Music artist and senior **Stella Miletich** enters her final year of high school while balancing AP classes, art, and a growing music career. Miletich explains that she chose her stage name, Stella Miller, for practical reasons: “A lot of my life, I struggled with people pronouncing my last name. I would get called up to a performance and it would just get absolutely butchered.” Miller proved to be the perfect stage name, feeling similar to her legal name while making it easier for audiences to remember and find her online.

This year Miletich is enrolled in AP Literature, AP Statistics, AP Government/Honors Economics, and two advanced art classes assisting her to complete her AP Art portfolio. She balances difficult coursework with her creative passions: though she has always been strongest in the arts, she still pushes herself in more challenging

courses such as AP Lit, which she admits has been her most demanding class so far. With a laugh she added, “We have, like, a huge book report—it’s due the same time as my college applications, which is really convenient.” Juggling a busy schedule of classes, rehearsals, and performances, Miletich sees her art classes as a rare space to slow down, reflect, and recharge. In art she can channel the same creative energy she puts into her music

Outside of school, Miletich commits nearly all of her time to music. She has been a classical pianist since childhood, but as she grew older she expanded her love for music by picking up the guitar and singing. This eventually led to her performing throughout the Bay Area to share her passion with other people. Her decision to give up volleyball and track in her junior year gave her the chance to fully focus on building a music career, which has already included radio appearances, live shows, and verified recognition on Instagram. For Miletich, writing songs can include hours of journaling before shaping those thoughts

into lyrics and melodies. She admitted, “A lot of times a melody will come to me at like 1:00 AM before I’m trying to get to bed. Never really convenient.”

Miletich’s growth as a performer has been significant. Initially, Miletich faced stage fright, but eventually she learned to approach each performance like practice, building confidence until performing became second nature. “I treated every performance like reps at the gym. The more I did it, the nerves kind of just dissipated, and it became natural,” she reflected. She embraces her time on stage as an opportunity to connect with people, whether in a cafe, at a school talent show, or on the internet.

Looking ahead, Miletich hopes to build a career in the music industry, ideally as a performer while also studying business in college. No matter the path, Miletich is determined to learn every part of the industry from production to promotion. She emphasized, “I want people to hear my music, and if my classmates are part of that audience, that’s more of a benefit for me.” Whether she is working on art or staying up writing songs, Miletich reveals her determination and creativity wherever she goes. As she prepares for life after high school, Miletich continues to take risks, embrace opportunities, and pursue a variety of creative endeavors.



## Nelson adjusts to high school life

by Siyona Singhal  
*Humor Editor*

On the football field, in the classroom, or with friends, freshman **Dominic Nelson** is putting his best foot forward and making the most of every opportunity.

Nelson’s academic schedule includes Biology, Cooking, Geometry, English, and Spanish. While he enjoys all of his classes, he shared that International Cuisine with **Cabot Weaver** has quickly become his favorite. “So far we’ve made pico de gallo and we made salted potatoes with onions,” he explained enthusiastically. As an aspiring chef, Nelson looks forward to the chance to express his creativity in the kitchen with an upcoming project in which students can design and cook their own dish from scratch.

Beyond the classroom, Nelson is making his mark on the freshman football team as both a receiver and kicker. Thanks to his family, football has been a significant part of Nelson’s life. “I always love watching football with my dad, and I played flag football a lot. Playing tackle football has always been something that I wanted to try,” he commented. Although this season is his first playing tackle football, he has already created some exciting memories on the field. His favorite moments include “getting a few catches and getting a lot of yards,” both of which gave him the chance to contribute to the team.

Aside from the games themselves, Nelson also appreciates the team bonding, including the first pasta feed of the season.

Nelson loves more than just football, as he has played soccer since he was very young. He typically plays left back, a position that allows him to combine defensive skills with speed and awareness on the field. This year, he hopes to try out for the Los Gatos High School soccer team and continue building on the years of experience he’s had. He explained, “I just like playing the sport. It’s really fun.

Beyond the field, Nelson fuels his adventurous side with mountain biking. He remarked that he started mountain biking because “my dad really got me into it, and he’s been mountain biking for a long time, so I’ve been doing it ever since I was really little, and I’ve just kept it up.” While Nelson enjoys biking around Santa Cruz and near the coast, his favorite spot is a mountain in Tahoe.

As a student-athlete, Nelson balances his academic responsibilities with practices, games, and personal interests. His positive attitude and willingness to try new things, whether they be experimenting with recipes in cooking class or tackling opponents on the football field, are helping him make the most of his freshman year. With his determination and enthusiasm, it’s clear that Nelson’s time at LGHS is just the beginning of a high school journey filled with accomplishments, growth, and plenty of memories.



## Moorehouse shines in field hockey

by Tori Schubert and Lila Zamansky  
*People and Media Production Editors*

Sophomore **Lizzie Moorehouse** is ecstatic to begin her second year at Los Gatos High School, taking on a rigorous course load and an abundance of extracurricular activities. Moorehouse, often described by friends as energetic, humorous, and optimistic, brings her bubbly personality into every aspect of her high school experience.

Tackling a heavy workload, Moorehouse is enrolled in English 10 Honors, French 3, AP European History, AP Calculus AB, Yearbook, and Chemistry. Moorehouse summed up her busy schedule in two words: “No Sleep.” Despite the challenges her courses present, she reminds herself, “I am capable of anything I set my mind to,” an outlook that fuels her determination to succeed. Moorehouse values her understanding of subjects and concepts rather than solely focusing on grades. She incorporates this value into her daily routine by spending additional time diving deeper into topics presented in class, and she encourages peers to take the same approach.

While Moorehouse enjoys all of her courses, her favorite subject is Yearbook. The class allows her creativity to shine by designing page layouts and exploring her newfound hobby of photography. Additionally, Moorehouse is an active member of

the community, taking part in the Fellowship of Christian Athletics Club (FCA), meeting with guest speakers, and merging her love for sports with culture. In her free time, she enjoys watching Dance Moms, spending time with her friends, and splurging on French baguettes.

Outside of the classroom, Moorehouse is engaged in many of LGHS’s athletic programs. Although an avid member of the soccer and track teams from a young age, Moorehouse has defined field hockey as her primary athletic focus. In addition to valuing skill level, Moorehouse emphasized the team bonding aspect as well, “We need to spend a lot of time outside of just [working with] our sticks to be able to create connections within our team, which fosters a loving environment.” Playing as an inner or attacking as a forward, Moorehouse readily supports her teammates on and off the field, overcoming any obstacles she encounters.

Moorehouse hopes to continue challenging herself academically while also pursuing her athletic passions. Leaving a lasting impression on her peers, Moorehouse is eager to embark on another busy year, advising, “You have to not care about what other people think about you, because if you do, you spend so much time worrying about that when you could just feel happy.” As Moorehouse prepares to set her own course, she urges others to remember that confidence is the key to success.





# Zu Wittgenstein takes on Los Gatos life a long way from home

by **Megan Saul and Tanvi Ambekar**  
*Editor-in-Chief and Opinion Editor*

Joining Los Gatos High School as a junior this year, **Ann-Katrin Zu Wittgenstein** is already a force to be reckoned with in the classroom and on the field.

Zu Wittgenstein is from Düsseldorf, Germany, currently participating in an exchange student program and staying in the United States for a school year. In Germany, Zu Wittgenstein enjoys playing sports and spending time with her family and friends. Her older siblings heavily inspired her move to the US. Her two older brothers, aged 20 and 18, did similar exchange programs; her oldest brother took part in a San Francisco high school exchange program while her middle brother came through a college exchange at the University of Mississippi. This inspired Zu Wittgenstein to come to the US as well, but despite her excitement, she misses her family back in Germany. Before they left, the five of them visited Las Vegas, Los Angeles, Death Valley, and California's Universal Studios. Because her father is very close with

her American host family, Zu Wittgenstein feels fairly comfortable living in the US so far. However, she awaits the day in 2026 when she can see her family again. She is also part of the LGHS field hockey team and has explored Los Gatos's food scene with some of her teammates. She noted that Crumbl Cookies is one of her favorite places she has tried in the US.

In terms of school, Zu Wittgenstein has mixed feelings. Her course load, which includes Spanish 1, PreCalculus Honors, Clothing & Fashion Design, US History, and English 11, is hectic. The concept of walking across a massive campus for six different classes and six different teachers contrasts sharply with the German system, where 31 students stay in one classroom for the whole day with one teacher for two consecutive years. This arrangement allows students to rest in between classes, keep long-term friendships, and chat daily with seatmates.

Since an early age, Zu Wittgenstein has been playing field hockey. She shared, "My brother played it, then my other brother, and then I started playing with my brother's friend's sister. Our parents wanted us to try it, and we were four years old, so I've just gotten used to it." You can find Zu Wittgenstein anywhere on the field, as she plays a little of every position. In Germany, she played for HTC Uhlenhorst Mülheim, where she helped the team win the 2023 German National Championships for the under-14 age group. At LGHS, she continues to play hockey, primarily as a midfielder. Zu Wittgenstein remarked, "I love being with my teammates, having a good time."

Electric on the hockey field and humble everywhere else, Zu Wittgenstein is a prime example of how passion and responsibility can coexist. Even while following in her brothers' footsteps through field hockey and US exchange, Zu Wittgenstein is paving her own path forward as she navigates the chaos of American high school life.



# Kanter jumps to success

by **Britt Melinauskas**  
*National Editor*

Stepping into new territory, freshman **Stella Kanter** is starting off her time at Los Gatos High School by earning a varsity spot on the volleyball team, achieving academic success, and learning to balance the demands of each.

Recently, Kanter claimed a place on the Los Gatos High School Girls' Varsity Volleyball team as an outside hitter. Last year, Kanter was on Vision Volleyball's 14 Gold team, which placed 11th at the Dallas Girls' Junior National Championships. As an important asset to her team, Kanter excelled in many positions thanks to her versatile talent playing the outside, middle, and opposite hitter positions.

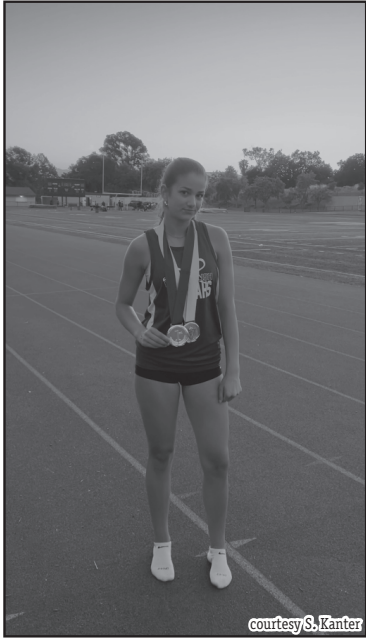
Kanter began her track and field career in seventh grade, yet in eighth grade, she discovered high jump and long jump as a career path she could envision herself in. Even though her track events will not begin until spring, Kanter cross-trains to improve her vertical jump in addition to other events. As she continues to set goals, Kanter wishes to reach school, county, and state records during her career at LGHS. This upcoming track season, Kanter plans on competing in high jump, long jump, and the 200-meter race. Previously, she reached 5'2" in

high jump — currently tied for first in the state for her age group — and 15'10" for long jump.

As a dual sport athlete, Kanter strives to commit to track and field, while also aiming for a college that supports her academic and athletic aspirations. Kanter acknowledged that she has to remain at her top fitness level for her athletic future and build a strong foundation for her path. Kanter explained how she ultimately chose a track and field athletic career: "My coaches [in volleyball] always called me undersized, or told me how short I was compared to other athletes. They never really cared how high I jumped. But then I really liked high jump because it brought out a skill that they always overlooked." Kanter further remarked on how her height was always a setback in volleyball. In track, she no longer is defined by her height, but rather her strength in vertical jumps.

Kanter is also involved and currently sponsored by IGYB a female-run organization which stands for "I Got Your Back," supporting individuals in sports. Engrossing herself in a wide range of extracurriculars, Kanter also dives into Algebra II Accelerated, Multimedia Journalism, Spanish II, Health & Fitness, English 9, and Biology with dedication and focus. As a career path, Kanter hopes to pursue a profession in journalism because of her passion for creative writing and interest in social issues.

Kanter approaches her freshman year with utmost determination and drive, leaving lasting impressions and impacts through her academic and athletic endeavors. Her quick adaptability has earned her admiration across campus for her perseverance and positive attitude.



# Gao prepares for a busy year

by **Fuyu Banno and Lydia Liu**  
*Graphics Editor and Public Relations Manager*

Sophomore **Aiden Gao** looks to start his second year at Los Gatos High School with a punch, already participating in challenging classes, unique hobbies, and extracurricular activities. Known among his friends for his easy-going personality and curiosity, Gao always finds ways to push himself academically while still doing the things he loves.

This year, Gao's schedule includes a mix of rigorous courses: AP European History, AP Calculus BC, English 10 Honors, French 3, Chemistry, and Robotics. Out of all of them, he enjoys AP European History the most. He particularly likes learning about the various figures that come up in the class. Gao takes pride in handling such a difficult course load, Especially in math and science, even though schoolwork takes up much of his time.

Outside the classroom, Gao finds peace and enjoyment in bouldering. An amateur boulderer, Gao takes solace in the sport and prefers to go solo rather than with a larger group. Gao explained that he was drawn to bouldering because "it's fun solving the problems," referring to the strategies required to reach the top of the wall. Outside of his schoolwork, he hopes to climb more often and reach higher levels. With his current level at V6, Gao hopes to move up to V7 and V8 in the near future.

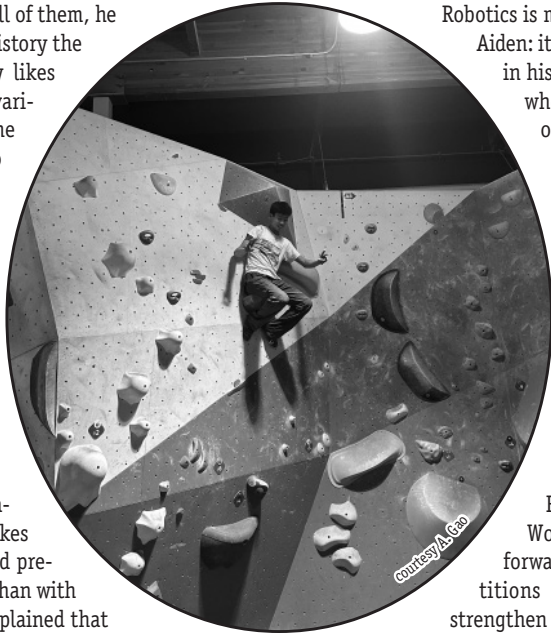
Gao also spends time as a clarinet player for the San Jose Youth Symphony (SJYS)'s Chamber group.

As an audition-only group, SJYS meets once a week to play as a whole symphony. The 2025 season began in early September, and although Gao has been playing the clarinet for about five years, this will be his first year as part of SJYS. Gao says he is looking forward to what SJYS brings him and is particularly excited to make new friends.

Back on campus, robotics plays a significant role in Gao's extracurricular life. As one of the only underclassmen serving as a shop manager, he helps oversee the pit and ensures everything runs smoothly during build sessions.

Robotics is more than a class for Aiden: it is a chance to follow in his brother's footsteps, who left a deep impact on the robotics team before graduating two years ago, while also discovering a passion for engineering and design. Gao has a clear goal for the year; he explained, "I want to go to Houston, then win [FIRST Robotic Competition Worlds]." Gao looks forward to more competitions and the chance to strengthen his skills and leadership experience.

Although Gao spends much of his time on academic pursuits, he does not forget about living in the moment and being stress-free. As he put it, "The vision is to cruise through life." Whether through classes, robotics, or bouldering, Gao gives his all while still remembering to enjoy the calmness of whatever path life takes him on.



# Leu looks forward to a future full of adventures

by **Claudia Casal and Arnav Singhal**  
*People and Sports Editors*

Senior **Landon Leu** is in the homestretch as he enters his final year of high school, preparing for college by making the most of his classes and spending the summer volunteering in Costa Rica.

This Nutella-loving senior fills up his schedule through his many classes such as AP Statistics, Honors Economics, AP Physics 1, AP Government, and his favorite, AP Spanish, commenting, "Throughout my high school experience, I've been taking Spanish. We've been doing a lot of cool activities and I've been learning a lot about other cultures... just, overall, a really good class." Aside from Spanish, Leu tries to avoid essays where he can, preferring to put his efforts into the sciences. While he hasn't decided on a college major, Landon hopes to explore new places along with his interest in biology. After school, you can find Leu hanging out at the library doing his homework and making new friends through many card games.

Leu's interest in both the Spanish language and Hispanic culture carries beyond his AP Spanish classroom. This past summer, Leu participated in the Amigos de las Americas program. Amigos offers an extensive opportunity for high school students to spend three

to six weeks doing community projects in native Spanish-speaking countries. Leu explained "The Amigos de las Americas project involves many people around the world to come together to be able to visit these Spanish speaking rural communities in different countries across the world, such as Panama, Costa Rica, and some other ones." Throughout the program, Leu spent several weeks in El Campo, Costa Rica, where he helped paint an elementary school and dug water irrigation pathways for the community. During his stay, Leu resided with a Costa Rican host family and recalled the language barrier as his main challenge. He overcame this challenge using a method he learned in his Spanish 2 class called circumlocation, where one describes their intended word using similar words or phrases.

He highlighted his favorite memories doing community projects with the children, eating fresh mangoes on toast with Mr. Shanka, his advisor, and making fresh dark chocolate from handpicked cacao. Overall, he recalls the program as a great opportunity to, as he pointed out, "connect with a bunch of community members and develop new skills that I didn't know I had."

This senior, often found greeting everyone in the hallway or wreaking havoc in his AP Physics class, is preparing to say his final goodbyes. Moving on from high school, Leu is looking forward to attending college and exploring his options before committing to a major. With his sights set on NYU, Leu plans to make the most of the year by pulling many pranks in Spanish class, eating plenty of Nutella, and taking his own advice to "take every opportunity life throws at you."





- NFL season begins after seven months
- Cross country starts its fall season

# Chelsea Football Club signs contract with Alyssa Thompson

by **Jordan Park**  
*Website Manager*

U.S. Women's National Team forward Alyssa Thompson has officially joined Chelsea, completing her transfer from Angel City FC just hours before England's transfer deadline on Sept. 4. The 20-year-old player signed a five-year deal worth around \$1.45 million, making it one of the most expensive transfers in women's soccer history.

At Angel City, Thompson was the star player and a cornerstone in the team's offense. Her time with the club began in 2023 when Angel City drafted her No. 1 overall, and she soon became a top scorer in the league. As a Los Angeles native and face of the franchise, Thompson brought a unique connection to the community and also played alongside her younger sister Gisele Thompson, who is an up-and-coming right back for both the National Women's Soccer League (NWSL) club and the US National Team. On Sept. 5, Angel City announced that the younger Thompson had signed a new deal through 2029, marking the end of the sisters' time together. As for the club itself, it ranks in the middle of the NWSL and continues to struggle with consistency.

Thompson's move reflects both Chelsea's long-term strategy and her ambition. For the club, the signing is part of its Vision 2030

plan to secure the next generation of world-class talent. At just 20, Thompson fits that profile perfectly. With Mayra Ramírez, another one of Chelsea's strikers, out until 2026 due to a severe hamstring injury, the club's pursuit of Thompson was a statement of ambition as well as a practical move. For Thompson, the transfer offers her a chance to pursue her own goals. To the club's media, she outlined her hopes for the future: "One, to win the Champions League. Two, I hope I develop a lot as a player, learn from the veterans on the team, and get their insight on things so that I can grow each year and become a better player. And third ... win. A lot."

Chelsea already boasts an impressive squad, packed with impressive talent and depth across every position. Adding Thompson, one of the most highly rated young American players, only enhances that strength but presents a challenge for the player herself. At the club, she will compete daily with elite teammates in training and fight for minutes alongside stars like Sam Kerr, Lauren James, and Catarina Macario. She will continue to play regularly in tough league matches and help the team pursue the Women's Champions League. This will be her first opportunity to break into such a stacked forward line which will test her skills and determination.

Thompson made her Chelsea debut on Sept. 14, coming on as a halftime substitution in a 3-1 win over Aston Villa. While she has yet to establish herself as a starter for the club, undeniable potential suggests she could become a key figure for Chelsea in the years to come, offering both immediate talent and long-term promise. (Sources: ESPN, NY Times)



ON THE FIELD: Alyssa Thompson poses with her Chelsea teammate, Casey Phair.

# NFL season starts with a bang

by **Atharava Pandey**  
*Sports Editor*

On Sept. 4, the National Football League (NFL) made its return after a seven-month hiatus. This season promises to be one of the most competitive in recent history, with various teams having a definite chance at Super Bowl contention.

The Philadelphia Eagles, the defending champions, have gotten off to a strong start this year. In their Week 1 matchup against the Dallas Cowboys, their divisional rival, the Eagles survived with a 24-20 win. Their star quarterback, Jalen Hurts, threw for 152 yards and two touchdowns. Similarly, in a Super Bowl rematch in Week 2 against the Kansas City Chiefs, Hurts and his team of superstars found a way to win the game 20-17. They capitalized on a dropped catch by Travis Kelce, which resulted in an interception and a touchdown on the other end. The Eagles look dangerous and will make a strong push for back-to-back Super Bowls.



The Green Bay Packers appear to be one of the most improved teams from last year. With their late offseason acquisition of defensive end Micah Parsons from the Cowboys, the Packers' defense looks formidable. In Week 1, the Packers had a showdown with the Detroit Lions, the former No. 1 seed in the NFC. The team showed their defensive grit, holding the most explosive offense in football to two field goals for the majority of the game. They ended up easily winning the game 27-13. The Packers' young quarterback, Jordan Love, has taken a leap to stardom this year, throwing for 292 yards and two touchdowns in

a Week 2 win against the Washington Commanders. The Packers, after bolstering their defense, are undoubtedly capable of winning the Super Bowl.

The matchup between the Buffalo Bills and the Baltimore Ravens, two of the top contenders in the AFC, is already a candidate for game of the year. It featured an offensive masterclass from quarterbacks Josh Allen and Lamar Jackson. The Chiefs, the reigning AFC champions, are looking vulnerable this year, and it seems likely that either the Ravens or the Bills will be heading to the Super Bowl. For most of this game, the Ravens were the better team, coasting with a 40-25 lead with five minutes to go. However, the Bills' quarterback, Josh Allen, rallied his team together and fought back, making the right plays and keeping the Bills in the game, who ended up winning by 41-40. They took advantage of a fumble by Ravens running back Derrick Henry, as well as the Ravens' defense collectively collapsing in the final few minutes.

There has been a large shift in the power dynamic of the NFL this year. This season promises to provide a wealth of entertainment for viewers, with teams like the Bills seemingly poised for success and teams like the Chiefs facing the end of their championship window. Only time will tell which teams have a real chance of winning the elusive Super Bowl. (Source: ESPN)



HUDDLE: Miles Sanders stands tall during national anthem.

# Bay Area introduces new team

by **Isabella Langner**  
*Center Editor*

As women's sports generate popularity across the country, the Bay Area has seen a tremendous amount of growth and joined in with women's teams in recent years. These recent additions include Bay Area Football Club and the Golden State Valkyries. This spring, the Women's National Football Club unveiled its newest franchise: the Golden State Storm.

The name and logo represent the surrounding Bay Area, including Berkeley Blue and California Gold. The logo depicts the face of a woman between the Golden Gate Bridge. The franchise's goal is to inspire the next generation of flag football players, fostering movement and energy. The team begins tryouts on Sept. 21 at the Oakland Roots training facility. The two following days of tryouts are on Oct. 5 and 18.

The Golden State Storm unveiled its board of advisors on Aug. 4, featuring well-known figures in the sports world, including retired football players Jeff Garcia and Reggie Stevens and San Jose Earthquakes general manager Chris Leitch. The Golden State Storm announced their head coach, Dallas Hartwell, on Aug. 11. Hartwell has coached football at multiple high schools, including Marin Catholic in Kentfield and Terra Linda in Rafael, California.

So far, the franchise has focused on connecting with the surrounding community. Most of their efforts have focused on high school flag football teams, as they started out sending welcome boxes to several programs. The Golden State Storm is also one of the newest sponsors of LGHS football. On Sept. 5, Guppy Uppal, the director of communications, and co-workers attended the Oakland First Fridays street festival. They set up a booth with Golden State Storm merchandise, a wheel for people to spin and win a prize, and handed out wristbands, stickers, and other merchandise. On Sept. 21, they set up a similar booth at Sunday Streets San Francisco. This festival cleared 1.4



LAUNCH: Golden State Storm hosts a pop-up event in Bay Area.

miles of streets in the Western Addition between 12 and 4 PM. Upcoming events the team is attending include the Charger Showdown at Wilcox High School on Sept. 26 and 27.

The Golden State Storm's ongoing program, the Golden State Showdown, spans the entire high school flag football season, highlighting three matchups a week. Their website posts a pregame preview detailing each game's time, location, and importance. For one chosen match, the coverage team makes a special visit to the site, setting up a table and capturing media. The Golden State Storm then generates a postgame article to share highlights and scores.

As the Golden State Storm increases their presence in the Bay, the team reflects a broader movement promoting women's flag football.



GREAT START: A poster advertises the new women's team.

# NBA offseason includes trades and blockbuster signings

by **Sahil Muthukrishnan**  
*Culture Editor*

The National Basketball Association's (NBA) October season tipoff is fast approaching after a long and eventful offseason. With its blockbuster trades and format changes, the summer is sure to lead to an interesting year.

The Orlando Magic traded for Memphis Grizzlies shooting guard Desmond Bane. The guard complements their star players, Paolo Banchero and Franz Wagner, with some much-needed shooting. The Grizzlies received veteran guard Kentavious Caldwell-Pope, Cole Anthony, and multiple first-round picks in return. Fans are hopeful that Bane will fit Orlando's system. While they've been a fringe playoff team for a few

years now, the Magic could pose a problematic matchup for opponents this year, despite their relatively young roster.

The Houston Rockets acquired Kevin Durant from the Phoenix Suns in an astonishing seven-team deal, a first in NBA history. The trade involved the Golden State Warriors, Minnesota Timberwolves, Brooklyn Nets, Atlanta Hawks, Los Angeles Lakers, and, of course, the Rockets and the Suns. The Suns received Rockets guards Jalen Green and Dillon Brooks, along with multiple first and second-round picks. In return, the Rockets received Durant from the Suns and returning player Clint Capela from the Hawks. Durant's unmatched efficiency, scoring, and impact on both sides of the court are sure to raise the Rockets' playoff chances, an exciting prospect for a team seeded second in their conference last year.

The Brooklyn Nets acquired Nuggets forward Michael Porter Jr. for elite shooting forward Cam Johnson. While this is an impactful move for the Nets, improving their scoring, the idea of an already phenomenal Nuggets team gaining some needed shooting and depth is much more exciting. The Nuggets were already a tough match-up for any team, but the depth they gained might just make the difference in a hyper-competitive Western Conference.

The Chicago Bulls finally traded injury-prone star Lonzo Ball to the Cleveland Cavaliers for defensive wing Isaac Okoro. While Ball has barely played for the last three years, when he is on the court, his talent is undeniable. His playmaking instincts are phenomenal, and if he can stay healthy, he will relieve some pressure from Cavs' star guards Darius Garland and Donovan Mitchell.

As if the trades didn't provide enough excitement, League Commissioner Adam Silver shared his intention to rework the All-Star Game. This comes as no surprise to fans. The game's format has been fluid as of late; from 2018 to 2023, it used a draft system. In 2024, the league reverted to the traditional East versus West teams used before 2018. In 2025, the format shifted again to a four-team mini tournament. This year, the game will adopt a Ryder Tournament-style format, with two American teams and one world team. With incredible foreign-born stars like Nikola Jokic, Giannis Antetokounmpo, Luka Doncic, and Shai Gilgeous-Alexander running the league, this year seems as good as any to implement this change.

The offseason's many shakeups are sure to lead to an exciting season for fans to tune into this October. (Sources: ESPN, Yahoo Sports)



SLAM-DUNK: Small forward Kawhi Leonard aggressively takes ball into the paint.



DRIBBLE: New York Knicks point guard Jalen Brunson takes the ball up the court.



# LGRC begins their new season with incredible swiftness

by **Julia Valencia**

*Opinion Editor*

Entering their 2025 fall season, Los Gatos Rowing Club (LGRC) has some big shoes to fill for the upcoming school year. After finishing their 2025 spring season off strong at Youth National Championships (YNC), LGRC athletes are now looking to completely dominate the US junior rowing realm at the upcoming regatta, Head of the Charles (HOTC), in Boston, Massachusetts.

In June, 14 boats and 66 LGRC junior athletes went to Sarasota, Florida, to compete in YNC. Six boats left YNC with medals, including three national titles. Keeping their commanding hold on the competi-



ROW ROW ROW : Los Gatos Rowing Club Men row across Lexington Reservoir.

tion, the Men's Youth Varsity Quad won one of the most competitive categories with more than two seconds between them and the second-place crew. Similarly, the Women's Youth Varsity Quad also won their highly competitive category, acting as redemption after a close race at the 2024 YNC, where the boat placed second. To wrap up the first-place finishers, the Men's Youth Second Varsity Quad also walked away from Florida with gold medals. LGRC's Men's Youth Varsity Four ended up placing second overall, an impressive result for a club that mainly sculls. The Women's Youth Second Varsity Quad, along with the under-16 eight, finished third in the nation after a hard-fought weekend.

A monumental record from last year's HOTC has LGRC rowers working overtime to continue improving their speed and technique as they prepare for this year's Boston race. In late 2024, LGRC's Women's Youth Coxed Varsity Quad won HOTC, having had the fastest time in the 5,000-meter race out of 53 other crews. LGHS graduates **Emme Adams**, **Harri Cheetham**, **Kyra Cherlopalle**, and senior **Jenna Yoder** were a part of the historic race. Additionally, the men's youth coxed quad placed fourth out of 50, and the men's youth four, including LGHS seniors **Nolan Hamm** and **Jasper Powell**, along with two other junior rowers, and coxed by junior **Kai Yoo**, placed fifth out of 90.

This year, LGRC's women's team will send a coxed youth quad and two youth eights, one more than last year, after getting a bid for a second eight. The men's team will send two more boats than last year, with the new addition of a coxed under-17 four and now two youth coxed fours. They are also re-sending their youth coxed quad.



BANG: Los Gatos Rowing Club Women win another Youth National Championship.

A factor that many often overlook is the sheer amount of time and effort that every LGRC athlete puts in just to be at the boathouse, with no promise of making the top boat. Balancing 18 hours of practice and roughly 100,000 meters each week, on top of schoolwork and outside commitments, demands complete dedication and discipline from these high schoolers.

As LGRC athletes continue their training for the fall season, make sure to keep an eye out for their race results on Instagram, @losgatosrowingclub, and if you are looking to try out a new sport, look no further than your local Lexington Reservoir. (Sources: Regatta Central, US Rowing)

## XC trains to win CCS titles

by **Quinn Hathaway**

*Media Production Editor*

The Los Gatos High School Cross Country Team is off and running, as they are several weeks into the season, and two meets are over. The team's roster has evolved to include new freshmen and students from other grade levels, saying goodbye to its seniors from last year.

Cross-country preseason began several weeks before school started, yet many varsity athletes trained for most of the summer. Preseason included learning some of the routes, upping the athletes' stamina, and bonding between team members. This year's cross country staff includes coaches **Danielle Kelly**, **Geoff Elmore**, **Ibet Allan**, **Nick Goddard**, and **Dave LeRoy**, with team managers **Kate Kinczel** and **Amav Mana**. Each is in charge of different aspects, with some focusing more on strength, others on long-distance running, and others on organization. However, all seven work together to help the team run seamlessly.

This year, the cross country team is divided into four groups—ranging from novice to elite runners—but all runners are put into one of three heats

for meets. Los Gatos's cross country races typically include two or three miles and feature different numbers of heats. Runners had time trials and a timed 5k at the end of August, which determined spots for the first meet. As there are many new faces on the team this year, it showcased the original PR times for many runners and helped simulate a race environment.

The most recent meet, the Jackie Henderson Invitational, featured all three heats, Freshmen/Sophomore (Frosh/Soph), JV, and Varsity, with a three-mile course. It was many runners' first meet, and it went well for all who participated. **Kiley Horwitz**, a sophomore and first-time cross country runner, stated that she was pleased with her performance, PRing by four minutes with her finish of 20.54 minutes. She commented that "[Jackie Henderson] was super fun...everyone was so supportive and ran very well." Sophomore **Finn Allan** placed the highest out of all Los Gatos runners, achieving second place in the Frosh/Soph race with a time of 15.45. Allan's time was only one second behind the first place winner and 25 seconds before the third place runner.

The team is gearing up for many more meets, including the upcoming CCS trials, as well as fun team bonding events such as team dinners. **Stephanie Zhou**, a new freshman on the team, expressed her excitement for the upcoming pasta feeds, saying, "Everyone [on the team] has been so welcoming and I'm really looking forward to more team bonding, especially pasta feeds." **Piper Pyle**, a junior and a captain of the girls' team, noted that she is excited for the November meet, Clovis Twilight, which is a special race that happens during evening hours.

With many exciting events coming up, the cross country team is hoping to build off the momentum of their strong start. Looking forward to more races and events, the team is ready to break records and make memories. The 2025 season is clearly off to a great beginning, and this year's group of runners is sure to continue on an upward trajectory.



CHEESE: Cross Country has a meet in the 2025-2026 season.

## Girls' volleyball begins after extensive preparation

by **Britt Melinauskas**

*National Editor*

Girls' volleyball has begun its season with several preseason games, tournaments, and league matches. To begin competitive play, varsity faced Saint Francis, last year's Central Coast Section (CCS) Open Champions, losing 0-3. The LG coaches and players quickly recognized the need to compete significantly harder in practice to play with upper-level teams, and they rapidly rebounded with a streak of three preseason wins. The Los Gatos Wildcats defeated Harbor 3-0, Soquel 3-0, and Salinas 3-1.

This year's varsity senior captains, **Portia Zeidler**, **Leilah Bakhtiari**, and **Annette Bassani**, have fulfilled their leadership roles and continue to do so. They have organized team reflections, holding each player accountable to their goals to maintain expectations. Bakhtiari

commented on her role as co-captain, "Having a leadership role this year has really allowed me to step up and support my teammates both on and off the court. I love that I'm given the opportunity to establish confidence within myself and others."

As a middle blocker for club volleyball season, Zeidler made an unexpected switch to rightside and has been an obstacle that several teams have had to confront. Zeidler said, "It's been an awesome opportunity to learn a new position. Learning how to play rightside is something that can always help in college, and it has been a great way to help the team this season."

Concluding their preseason schedule, the Wildcats competed in the Half Moon Bay Tournament as well as the Menlo School Tournament. On Aug. 30, they secured a fourth-place finish at Half Moon Bay with a 2-2 record, and on Sept. 20, the varsity team earned a strong placement at Menlo, finishing second in the bronze division with a record of 2-2.

Throughout league play, the varsity squad has asserted its dominance with decisive wins over Mountain View, 3-1, and Monta Vista, 3-0. While the junior varsity team fell to Mountain View 2-0, it beat Monta Vista 2-1. The freshman team celebrated its first league victory with a 2-1 triumph over Santa Clara. All three teams lost to Sacred Heart Preparatory on Sept. 17: varsity 3-0, junior varsity 2-1, and the freshman 2-0.

Since the varsity team has had to rebuild their team, adding several new players to the roster, sophomore **Caylin Thomas** stated, "It's been a little rough at the start since we lost so many key players last year, but I think with time, our team will grow and be just as good as last year." Sophomore **Kate Langner** added how the team has had several team bonding opportunities to grow closer: "We always come together

when things get harder. Undefeated in league, hopefully open for CCS, and definitely league champions are goals that we hope to get as we build the team."

The Wildcats plan to make considerable upsets this year and hope to excel despite their starting setbacks, aiming to be recognized as a top team. Be sure to cheer on your LG Girls' Volleyball team as they take on their upcoming season with determination! (Source: MaxPreps)



CRUNCH TIME: The volleyball player prepares to set the ball for a spike.



MEMORIES: Volleyball team poses for its first group photo of the year.

## LG football starts season

by **Megan Saul**

*Editor-in-Chief*

As the 2025-2026 football season gets underway, Los Gatos High School Boys' Varsity Football is ready for a winning season that ends with hoisting the Central Coast Section (CCS) trophy. Following a successful season but a tough loss in the CCS finals against St. Francis High School, the team prepared extensively, refining its skills and team bond. This offseason, the team rebuilt its starting lineups after losing many valuable players from last season to graduation, specifically on the offensive and defensive lines. Additionally, before the start of school, the Wildcats had a two-day sleepover in the gym. They spent their days on the field and picking up trash in town, and nights playing video games and eating junk food. Senior **Miguel Lezama** shared, "Camp is always great, especially when you're surrounded by family."

So far, the varsity team has a 2-2 record. In the first game of the season, at home on Aug. 29, LG faced Soquel High School. Despite being a close, high-scoring game, the Wildcats lost by a score of 42-40 after Soquel took the lead in the final minutes.

On Sept. 5, LG traveled to Brentwood to play Liberty High School. Although the first quarter ended 0-0, the Wildcats came back ready to take down Liberty, scoring 28 points in a single quarter. The quarterback, senior **Callum Schweitzer**, started strong by throwing a 37-yard pass to senior **Beau Musser**, earning the Wildcats their first touchdown of the game. Schweitzer dominated, running in for the next touchdown and throwing 152 yards in total. Additionally, senior **Efe Acar** had a stellar night, making all five of his extra point kicks. On the defensive side, junior **Braddock Boyer** and senior **Bryce Novinsky** caught interceptions, and seniors **Simon Panu** and **Rowan Merrick** each had a sack. In the end, the Wildcats were victorious with a score of 35-7.

The third game of the season, an away game against Clovis High School on Sept. 12, was once again

a high-scoring game, where the opponent narrowly won. Despite the 41-40 loss, senior **Nathaniel Vorobeichik** said that the loss was still his favorite part of the season so far: "Even though we lost, it was a really close game, and I really enjoyed the comeback. I like working hard with my teammates after we score, celebrating and cheering with each other."

Most recently, on Sept. 19, the LG football team played Burlingame High School, shutting them out 49-0. Senior **Grayson Doslak** remarked, "The team played great all around, and the linemen and receivers blocked amazingly, making it easy to score four touchdowns."

By scoring the first touchdown, Doslak broke through in this week's running game, and Schweitzer played another standout game. Schweitzer offered some post-game thoughts: "The way we continued to work after the tough loss last week is something that is going to help us a lot throughout the stretch of the season. Getting a shutout is a huge confidence booster going into the bye week, but a week four win versus Burlingame means nothing if we don't continue to work towards a CCS championship."

The Wildcats' next game is at home on Oct. 3 versus Pittsburgh High School. With a Pink Out theme against one of LG's biggest rivals, be sure not to miss this event. (Sources: MaxPreps)



SET HIKE: Los Gatos football prepares to rush Soquel linemen.





# POM: Mathijs Dirven commits to Santa Clara University

by Sam Gruetter and Jane Wilde

*Editor-in-Chief and Humor Editor*

Senior **Mathijs Dirven** has made quite a splash entering his fourth and final year on the boys' water polo team as a varsity captain and recent Santa Clara University commit. Dirven does not just play for the school team but extends his water polo prowess to club play, an endeavor that has taken him to Croatia to train for several years. Dirven has played year-round club water polo for 11 years, advancing enough to participate in training camps abroad. He described a distinct



photos S. Gruetter

WATCH OUT: Dirven prepares to make strong pass to his teammates in water polo.

difference between the American and European style of play, noting, "It's fun, it's definitely a little bit like, different playing in Europe the play styles are a little different. It's more physical in the reffing as well, as they let you do more." However, this is a form of play he much prefers and one that better replicates college water polo, an approaching reality for Dirven in light of his recent commitment to Santa Clara.

Dirven selected Santa Clara in July of his junior year. He accounted for many factors when choosing a school, putting the most emphasis on the balance among academics, social life, and athletics, requirements that Santa Clara perfectly aligned with. Most notably, their business program is ranked 11th in the country, and the program which Dirven plans to pursue, with a special emphasis on finance or accounting. He wants to focus on accounting and finance in hopes of staying financially stable, with a desire to live in economically competitive Los Gatos after graduation.

Dirven described the close-knit bond between him and his teammates, stating, "It's probably the closest our teammates feel with each other. The chemistry is getting better, and we're starting to hang out more outside of just the pool deck." Dirven said that the team's camaraderie makes them more competitive with each other and they "bring everybody's game up." In addition to his teammates, Dirven's coach, Jack Bowen, has significantly helped him throughout the college recruiting process and made him improve as a player overall.

The Division One commit wasn't always a star swimmer. He described this hardship, sharing that he started as a goalie since he "wasn't able to swim very well" and was "so uncomfortable in the water." Dirven is a strong testament to hard work and dedication paying off, as he's now off to swim for one of the top water polo schools in the country. Though water polo is challenging, Dirven finds it motivating to build strength because of how "demanding the sport is." He's taken this newfound love for swimming outside of the pool and into the ocean, discovering his passion for surfing. Dirven surfs at Santa Cruz's popular Pleasure Point, and describes it as one of his favorite activities, as he really enjoys "surfing and spending time with friends."



GOAL: Dirven celebrates passionately after making a great play to score a point.

# LG Girls' Varsity Field Hockey sets their eye on a CCS title

by Tanya Chang

*Sports Editor*

After a tough 2024 season that ended with a 1-0 loss to Willow Glen High School in the CCS Quarterfinals, the Los Gatos High School Girls' Varsity Field Hockey team is back on the turf, determined to reclaim the championship they last captured in 2023 against St. Ignatius High School. This game marks the Wildcats' 17th CCS title, and this season, they are focused on adding another trophy to their collection.

The Wildcats wasted no time building momentum in preseason play. They opened with a commanding 12-0 win over Homestead High School, followed by an 8-0 victory over Stevenson High School, an 11-1 rout of Hollister High School, and a 7-0 triumph over Branham High School. The biggest victory of all the preseason games was their victory over Saint Francis High School, one their toughest competitors so far, beating them 2-0. Each game showcased the team's attacking depth, scoring power, and ability to control possession through precise passing and patient buildup play. Sophomore **Mila Maletic** stated, "Preseason was a great way for us to improve and work on our skill to be ready for any game this year. It has really helped us to build team confidence and build a strong bond."

League competition began on a strong note as well. Los Gatos rolled past Palo Alto 9-0, moving the ball up the sidelines with speed and precision while forcing turnovers that led to quick scoring chances.



T.Chang

PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT: LG field hockey spends time working on passing.

In their latest matchup, the Wildcats faced Santa Clara and delivered another statement win with a 12-0 scoreline. The offense spread the ball effectively, while the defense prevented Santa Clara from mounting any sustained attacks. Senior Co-Captain **Leaya Cleary** explained, "The turf of Santa Clara was longer, which made it difficult to play on, but that didn't stop us from succeeding and claiming another win." They also secured two more victories, defeating Santa Clara High School 12-0 and beating Lynbrook High School 15-0.

Beyond the scoreboards, the team has focused on building trust and chemistry. With a mix of returning seniors and rising underclassmen, players have rotated positions to expand versatility and learn from one

another on the field. This flexibility has kept opponents off balance while giving younger players valuable experience. Freshman **Gianna Ajlouny** commented, "Joining the field hockey team was presented as a great opportunity for me, where I am able to create bonds not only in my grade but also adapting tricks from the older girls."

Leadership has been another key strength this year. The team's seniors have organized film sessions, extra practices, and team events to ensure that every player feels prepared and supported. The coaching staff has emphasized not only technical skills but also resilience and discipline, knowing that postseason play demands both mental toughness and adaptability. As **Coach Henry Rayes** always emphasizes, "No matter the score written on the scoreboard, play like it's 0-0."

Looking ahead, Los Gatos still has ten league games before the postseason begins. Each contest offers a chance to refine strategies, emphasize teamwork, and prepare for the intensity of CCS competition. The Wildcats understand that the path back to the championship will require consistent focus and execution, but their early dominance suggests they are on track to contend for the title once again.

Fans can support the Wildcats in their upcoming games, including Saratoga High School on Sept. 29, with Varsity beginning at 4:00 PM and JV following immediately after. With a talented roster blending experience and fresh energy, Los Gatos is ready to make the 2025 season one to remember. (Source: MaxPreps)

# Water polo returns in style

by Nelson Kramer

*Editor-in-Chief*

It is September, and water polo season is back in full swing at Los Gatos High School. The boys' varsity squad is already surpassing expectations, winning three of their first four matches. Meanwhile, the girls' varsity team is showcasing impressive skills and teamwork during practice, which bodes well for their upcoming matches. This season, Los Gatos aims to do even better than last year, as each athlete sets goals and is ready to strive for even more.

LGHS has some standout players, including El Gato's Player of the Month, senior and captain **Mathijs Dirven** on the Boys' Varsity Water Polo Team, and senior **Marina Jackson**, captain of the Girls' Varsity Water Polo Team, to name a few. LG water polo boasts numerous talented and hardworking players this season, and it doesn't just stop with the seniors. Freshman **Tai Engelman** brings impressive young talent to LGHS, having recently earned a silver medal at the US Pan American Water Polo Championships as a member of the USA National Cadet Team.

Even though LGHS has many talented upperclassmen players on both water polo teams, spectators



N. Kramer

LOCKED IN: Senior **Ethan Zheng** gears up to take a shot.

should not discount the JV talent. The Girls' JV Water Polo Team recently wrapped up their first game against Leigh, with a final score of 11-5.

For the players, water polo is more than just the scores; it is about being part of a strong community at LGHS, comprised of committed athletes. To gain a deeper understanding of being an individual in a sport built on teamwork, upperclassmen players shared their experiences on the team.

In terms of how the team has shaped her overall development as a player, Jackson noted, "It's like having another family, and I have gained so many more friendships from it. Many of my memories from freshman year are from having fun with my teammates, going to games, and the team sleepover." Jackson added that she will miss the relationships formed over the years from water polo the most, as she reaches the end of her high school career.

On boys' varsity, senior and goalie **Nico Bianchi** shared what he likes most about playing water polo: "I enjoy the laughs and tears with my team while we try to maintain a high ranking in league and CCS." He offered some entertaining scenes from past seasons: "My favorite memory with the team is beating Los Altos and showering while listening to Party in the USA. Another was taking the vans and sleeping in the hotel in Sacramento." Moments like these highlight how water polo is about more than just performance in the water. The experience players have also depends on the community that comes together after games and during team events; it's all about finding that balance.

(Sources: Los Gatos, MaxPreps, USA Water Polo)

# LG flag football starts anew

by Isabella Langner

*Center Editor*

Coming from a rigorous off-season, LGHS Girls' Varsity Flag Football is looking forward to its second season. The team proved to be almost unbeatable last year, with a record of 24-2 overall. This year, coaches and players are determined to keep the program heading in the same direction: to be one of the best in the Bay Area.

Preseason began in February and consisted of lifting in the weight room and conditioning on the track from Monday through Friday. After building up strength and endurance, they added field practices to focus on specific flag football techniques and prepare the team for the upcoming fall season.

Team chemistry is a major motivator in the team's performance. Senior **Heather Hansen** described, "We're all one big, happy family," and noted pasta feeds as a fun activity bringing the team closer together. Freshman **Makena Wedemeyer** shared, "I like the coaches a lot. They're all really nice. They are really supportive, and if you don't know something, they are good at explaining it to you." Before games, the teammates usually "hype each other up" around their giant speaker, said Wedemeyer. She also shared her appreciation for her teammates: "It's really fun; I made a lot of new friends."

LGHS flag football has been putting in the work during their practices five days a week, with training recently focusing on offensive plays after warm-ups. Hansen, a cornerback for LGHS, regarding her favorite part of the position, said, "It's just so satisfying. I get the flag, everyone cheers, I love it." Wedemeyer shared that she wants to take advantage of practices to "get better at playing more offense, because I'm playing more defense right now, but I want to get better with my [offensive] skills."

Overall, the team's record is 4-3. Their first match was against Branham on Aug. 29, and they started off strong with a 13-0 win. They followed up with a 25-0 win over St. Francis and a 32-0 victory against Hill. Sacred Heart Prep broke their streak when LGHS lost to their team 7-26. To bounce back, the team plans to focus on offensive drills that coaches recently implemented.



courtesy Kelly Osorio

FOCUSED: Receiver **Sophie Riese** gets ready to catch ball.

In a tournament earlier this season, LGHS won the title and new uniforms as a reward. Their home jerseys are completely new, representing flag football's place as an official sport at the school. Their away jerseys are still LGHS football's old ones. In their tournament on Sept. 13, girls' flag football went 1-3, playing impressive teams like Granada and Armador Valley.

Almost all of the players looked most forward to their match against Menlo School, a team that went undefeated last year; unfortunately, the match ended in a 14-31 loss for Los Gatos. However, with the implementation of new plays and their determination in practice, girls' flag football will be sure to use this loss as motivation for future matches. Make sure to attend their next home game on Oct. 1 against Mountain View!