

# El Gato

THE STUDENT NEWSPAPER OF LOS GATOS HIGH SCHOOL

A. Coven

## LGHS explores future careers at JobCamp

by Gowri Sunil  
News Editor

LGHS held its annual staff development day on Mar. 9, giving students a day's break from school. While many enjoyed the chance to relax, around 300 students participated in LGHS's JobCamp. Each Student shadowed a professional in a field of their choice, with a wide range of options including engineering, finance, and healthcare.



courtesy A. Tsao

OUT OF THIS WORLD: A model spaceship greets students outside NASA headquarters.

Heather LeRoy, the Job Shadow Day Chair of LGHS's Home and School Club, organized the program and restarted it in 2022 after the COVID-19 pandemic. Since then, it has grown from about 150 students and 30 companies to 300 students and 45 companies. LeRoy pointed out that in addition to introducing students to potential careers, JobCamp allows them to "connect with other professional adults — have a firm handshake, make eye contact when talking, prepare good questions, and have a meaningful conversation."

Freshman **Aditi Anumula** shadowed engineers at Amazon, where she toured labs and learned how they test popular devices like Kindle and Alexa during the design process. Anumula recounted the experience as "very eye-opening, because I had never been in a real engineering lab setup before." Interested in space and engineering, sophomore **Abigail Tsao** had the exciting opportunity to tour NASA behind the scenes. Tsao observed vertical motion simulations and wind tunnels, learning how they draw in air to equalize airflow. Having gained a deeper understanding of space science and engineering, Tsao would definitely recommend JobCamp to other students.

Additional participants, like junior **Meredith Harris** and sophomore **Lumin Bae**, explored careers relating to healthcare. Harris visited Intuitive Surgical, a biotechnology company that creates robots to more precisely replicate a surgeon's movements. There, Harris received hands-on experience with the robots, helping her understand how surgeons interact with the technology. Meanwhile, Bae shadowed an optometrist at the local Los Gatos Eye Care, following in his sister's footsteps, who had shadowed there years earlier and eventually started interning at the clinic. Under the guidance of the professional optometrist, Bae explored high-tech machines used to study the eye in great detail, allowing him to view the entire anatomy of the eye, including the cornea and optic nerve. He was surprised to learn that "you can know if you have diabetes or high blood pressure by looking at the back of the eye because it has really thin blood vessels."

Traditionally, LGHS holds JobCamp on its March staff development day, and 2026 marked its fourth successful year. The impact of the program would not be possible without a team of supportive volunteers; including Dave LeRoy, **Ryan LeRoy**, **Nadia Thompson**, Lucia Thompson, Qing Wang, and Sherry Lee, all of whom helped with the website, social media, and recruitment. By connecting students with professionals, JobCamp continues to provide LGHS students a glimpse into the future beyond high school.

(Source: JobCamp)



courtesy A. Gao

SPEC-TACULAR: Students shadow employees of Los Gatos Eye Care & Aesthetics.

## Students travel to Spain and Morocco

by Tanya Chang and Lila Zamansky  
Sports and Media Production Editors

On the annual LGHS sophomore and junior trip to Spain and Morocco, students traveled with chaperones/teachers: **Stephanie Pearson**, **Emily Christie**, **Kevin Rogers** and **Christie Pacheco**, to immerse themselves in the spirited cultures of both countries.

Teachers in the Social Studies department rotate planning these trips; Pearson was in charge this year. Her inspiration originated from her interest in visiting Morocco as well as finding a place with a mild climate during February break. Pearson identified recruitment as the biggest challenge to the planning; however, this year, she stated, "There was just automatic interest, and that was surprising." Unfortunately, an unexpected airline strike one day before the trip led to the division of chaperone groups. As Rogers noted, "We were in disbelief when the proposal was to divide everyone up and take four different flights." In the end, this amazing group of teachers found a way to get everyone safely to the destination as soon as possible.

On traveling day, the two groups that arrived early got a chance to walk around Madrid. Despite a rocky start, the entire group began their second day exploring the city of Seville, viewing historic landmarks like the Alcazar Castle and the Cathedral of Seville. The students ended with a fun flamenco dancing lesson and show, where dinner was prepared.



courtesy S. Pearson

CAMERA READY: LGHS students and staff pose for a group photo in Morocco.

On the final day in Spain, they stopped by the city of Rhonda before heading to Tarifa to depart for Morocco. The group arrived in Tangier after a one-hour ferry ride and headed to Chefchaouen, also known as the Blue City. The next day, they visited the bustling ninth-century medina of Fes, walking along the narrow streets and colorful markets, where the students saw pottery production and ancient tanneries. They finished the eventful day with an authentic cooking class. Finally, in the coastal city of Casablanca, the group went to the modern medina



L. Zamansky

POSTCARD PERFECT: The group explores and photographs the streets of Spain.

Beyond the destinations, the trip had a lasting impact on the students. Even with more time on the bus than previously anticipated, sophomore **Fiona McInerney** said that her favorite part of the trip was "the karaoke on [the] bus ride and getting bread from a medina bakery." Another sophomore, **Marco Machado**, described his key takeaway to "always go into new experiences with an open mind. [I] broke some assumptions I had about those places," displaying how the trip expanded students' perspective in new cultures, an atypical firsthand experience for most people.

Both students and chaperones reflected on the bond created through shared adventures and challenges that come with traveling. As Pearson explained, "Yeah, we do it every year because we love it. We love traveling. We love seeing all these places with these kids." Pearson and the crew have already begun their planning for next year, so be sure to check out the trip to Ireland in 2027!

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courtesy Rawpixel

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courtesy Rawpixel

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J. Park

# TOM: Chris Cheman continues to inspire students

by Hayley Strahs and Abby Coven

Editor-in-Chief and News Editor

From cultivating a positive learning environment to deploying creative incentives to encourage student progress, **Chris Cheman** demonstrates daily his compassion and belief in every student he teaches. At LGHS, Cheman instructs Pre-Algebra, Algebra A and B, and co-teaches Geometry with **Kerry Keplinger Northen**.

To help pay for college, Cheman enrolled in the Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) in high school with plans to join the military after graduation. Unfortunately, he was not able to continue with the program and was medically discharged after having two collapsed lungs the summer before his senior year. Cheman recalled, "It all fell apart my senior year, and I had to restructure everything." His reset took him to the University of California, Santa Cruz, where Cheman studied art, specifically the history of printing. He always loved art but did not want a career as a printer or artist, so he found himself on a path to teaching.

An avid surfer since middle school, Cheman traveled widely for surfing adventures in Mexico, Central America, and Indonesia. Cheman's first catalyst for becoming a teacher came after meeting an Indonesian teacher and volunteering to teach English at her school. The classroom was blazing hot without air conditioning, and they closed the windows to lessen the constant noise from motorbikes and traffic outside. Still, Cheman found working every day as a teacher fulfilling. After returning from Indonesia, he worked at a community center supporting children



REEL IT IN: While fishing, Cheman and his son capture a massive fish.

with disabilities, during which time he officially decided to pursue his teaching credential.

This June will mark Cheman's fourth year at LGHS, and he is ecstatic about "seeing students that I started with as freshmen successfully graduating high school." Every tutorial in his classroom, Room 33, is bustling with former students reminiscing about their time in his class, including a memorable incident that took place two years ago, when Cheman agreed to a bet with a student: he would dye his hair pink if that student received all As. He admitted, "The student was also exceptionally bright, so I kind of knew I was doomed about halfway through it." Including, but not limited to, his one-time hair change, Cheman constantly motivates his students to succeed in the classroom.

In contrast to his cheerful demeanor, Cheman loves horror movies. His favorites are the highly realistic Texas Chainsaw Massacre films because "those are the ones that are the scariest for me, because you're like, 'that could really happen.'" When he's not being spooked, Cheman spends time with his family: his wife, ten-year-old son, and five nameless neon tetra fish. For Cheman, mornings are a time to "make lunches and draw pictures and all that stuff" for his son.

From teaching English in Indonesia to forging individual connections at LG, Cheman has impacted countless kids throughout his teaching career. His mantra is simple: "I always try to bring positivity into the room. Always smile."



OUTDOORS: Cheman and his family pose for a picture during sunset.

# LGHS drama puts on spring musical Hadestown!

by Hayley Strahs

Editor-in-Chief

LGHS invites you to go way down to Hadestown on Mar. 20. Winning the Tony for Best Musical in 2019, Hadestown is a jazzy and heart-wrenching retelling of the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice. Director and LGHS alumna **Lexi Balistreri** described Hadestown as "a beautiful story about love and loss and aspirations and kind of just finding yourself." As Orpheus attempts to save Eurydice from the underworld, the two characters' stories "mirror each other in a way, so we get to follow these characters and see what happens in their lives and see them reflected in each other," as Balistreri clarified.

In addition to its distinct music and timeless story, Hadestown is known for being especially tech-intensive. To transition from the underworld to Earth and vice versa, the crew has a myriad of complex light cues to illuminate the notably large set in different ways throughout the show. Also, rather than utilizing a built-in turntable, choreographer and LGHS graduate **Katarina Kelly** is "relying a lot more on dancing and physical movement" to achieve a similar effect. In each scene, the ensemble takes on new roles. As Kelly noted, "In the mines, they become like machines almost, and they're also people in the overworld [scenes]."

On the audio side of things, senior and Sound Lead **Lylie Cheri** pointed out that "the band is onstage, so we have to regulate that more carefully than we usually do for other shows." Since Hadestown has few spoken lines, all of which are set to music, everything must go according to plan sound-wise. Sophomore **Devika Raj** remarked how the constant music is also a challenge for the cast: "Getting everybody to be exactly on the same page is kind of difficult at times, but we're getting better at it for sure." While music for Hadestown has been difficult for all parties, both Cheri and Raj remarked how they love spending time with the younger cast and crew. Raj commented that "we have a lot of new faces and a lot of new talent coming in," and Cheri reflected that "it's been really nice seeing them grow."

Junior **Adolfo Orendain**, who plays Hades, has been involved in theater at LG since his freshman year. Engrossed in the process, Orendain elaborated on the most rewarding parts of Hadestown rehearsals: "meeting new people, practicing singing, practicing acting, and then setting goals for myself to improve." While often strenuous, Orendain implores fellow students to give acting a chance. He asserted, "If you like movies and if you think movies are cool, you should always think of trying to act

because maybe you have a passion for it. If you like it, you should always try your best to do what you love."

The cast and crew of Hadestown will perform in the LGHS Theater on Mar. 20, 21, 26, and 27 at 7:00 PM and on Mar. 28 at 5:00 PM. Tickets are available on GoFan; come support these talented performers and technicians!



REHEARSE: Members of the LGHS spring musical practice choreography.

# LGHS mock trial delivers

by Ivan Habib

Website Manager

Having recently concluded their competition season, LGHS's Mock Trial team is reflecting on the immense progress they have made in 2025 and 2026. This year, they advanced to the quarterfinals of their regional division with an impressive record of three wins to only one loss.

Although having to find new attorneys to coach the team and bring the new team members into the world of mock trial presented challenges, the team refused to let their difficulties hinder their preparation. **Farah Thariq**, LGHS junior, co-captain, and prosecution closing attorney for the team, explained the difficulties of finding new coaches: "We were scrambling through to find some coaches to participate. I started emailing people that I knew were attorneys, and somehow I was able to find two coaches that were able to coach us this year, and they were honestly, the best decision ever." Their coaches, Linden Dexter and Alisha Hackern, are real attorneys who work at the Santa Clara County District Attorney's office and bring their courtroom expertise to the students, helping guide them through the tricky case of the poisoning of a cooking show judge. Additionally, the team had a lot of members who were new to mock trial. Thariq pointed out, "I was able to help them with our objections ... forming examinations, and, in general, even though I was in the prosecution, I was able to help the defense, to form theory of the case."

They competed in the Santa Clara County Teach Democracy California Mock Trial section, advancing to the quarterfinals with a record of 3-1. Thariq, who has been doing mock trial since her freshman year, reflected on their success this year: "In my freshman year, we were zero and four. Last year we were one and three, but this year we were actually three and one, so we went to the quarterfinals. We lost in the quarterfinals, but we got to compete



TEAMWORK: The Mock Trial team prepares for a round.

in a real courtroom where actual trials are held, so that was really cool." **Max Clarke**, LGHS junior and witness for the team, attributed the triumph to "our practice for months before we even did any kind of competition against another team. We'd meet every Monday and Wednesday for the most part for two hours, we'd go pretty late, 8 PM, sometimes longer." Reflecting on his two years in mock trial, Clarke noted, "It's one of the most fun experiences I've had... we've built a real big sense of camaraderie and a really close bond with each other."

Already planning for their next season, the team is optimistic. Clarke emphatically described his aspirations for next year: "I want to go all the way. Come on. We want to win county." Thariq shared her hopes: "Next year, I really want new members ... I want to find more people who actually enjoy mock trial and want to grow and make friends."



SMILE: The prosecution side competes at the quarterfinals.

# Music program performs

by Fuyu Banno and Sahil Muthukrishnan

Graphics and Culture Editors

The LGHS Music Department recently took nearly 200 of its students on a trip to Anaheim, California, where they performed at Disneyland. The department brought groups from each branch: choir, band, and orchestra. Students experienced once-in-a-lifetime opportunities, like going backstage to make studio recordings of Disney franchise staples such as The Muppets and The Incredibles with a professional coach.

Instrumentalists are typically separated by grades and skill levels during the school year. In contrast, the Disneyland trip provided each student with a chance to perform with their entire ensemble. Furthermore, the weekend of fun and memories allowed students to hang out with their peers from the department's other groups.

The trip started off on Feb. 27, when the students drove to the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), touring the campus and workshoping their pieces with the university's acclaimed music staff. Junior **Kay Clevenger**, a choir student, remarked, "I really enjoyed the clinic. [The clinician] gave lots of meaningful advice. Even if he was overly blunt at times, he clearly knew what he was talking about." After their stop at UCLA, the students drove down to Anaheim, where they enjoyed dinner at Downtown Disney. Senior **Nicolas Deschaux-Beaume**, another choir student, commented, "The food was a little pricey, but pretty good overall, and we were pretty tired and hungry at that point. Getting to be at Disney made the wait worth it, though."



QUICK BREAK: Music students enjoy a day at Disneyland.

Students arrived at the recording studio early in the morning to participate in an exceptional opportunity: each ensemble worked with a clinician to record parts of Disney soundtracks alongside the actual Disney footage. More specifically, the band, as well as the orchestra, recorded background instrumentals for movies such as A Bug's Life in a semi-professional setting to mimic the actual recording process for movie soundtracks. Similarly, the choir recorded alongside movies such as The Muppets and Tangled. Clevenger mentioned, "It was really cool to work with the coach; he was really sweet and made it a really fun experience for us."

Afterward, students were able to explore Disneyland and California Adventure in full. Many stayed until closing, maximizing the amount of time enjoying rides, eating food, and playing charades with friends as they waited in line. On their final day in the park, students performed for crowds in California Adventure, getting to show off their multiple months of hard work. The trip was a blast for many students, regardless of ensemble. Orchestra student and junior



CRESCENDO: Mixed Choir performs in California Adventure.

**Nolan Lin** looked back on his experience on the trip: "You get to hang out with your friends and get to know people better, and go away from your devices. [Also] It was fun to play with every orchestra, not just your own."

The musical trip allowed students to hone their music skills with gifted mentors, play with their peers, and create lifelong memories at the "Happiest Place on Earth." The musical program continues to unlock opportunities for its students to grow.

# San Francisco teachers strike for salary adjustments

by **Kayla Mitchell**  
*Public Relations Manager*

The labor contract between the United Educators of San Francisco (UESF) and the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) expired last month, leading to conflict between the two groups. Unsuccessful negotiations increased tensions until the union voted to authorize a strike, prompting teachers to walk out of schools until they could reach a compromise with the district.

Many of the educators in UESF, a union representing about 6,000 teachers, counselors, school nurses, and staff, were dissatisfied with their pay and health care benefits in the current labor contract. The San Francisco teachers have been struggling to maintain their livelihoods, pouring large sums into personal healthcare accounts. The union argued the district's salaries were not keeping up with the increasing cost of living, and a change to the contract was necessary. The new teacher accommodations would maintain the district's quality of education, stopping the reoccurring trend of teachers leaving for higher-paying areas. In their initial proposal, UESF demanded a 9% pay increase over two years, along with district-paid health insurance



STAND PROUD: Local teachers protest their unfair wages.

for their families, and more support in special-education departments to relieve workload. SFUSD did not support the union's proposal because of the district's budget deficit of over 100 million dollars. In response to the district's inability to financially support the requests of UESF, the teachers participated in a four-day strike, promptly causing schools

in San Francisco to shut down. In support of the walkout, president of UESF Cassandra Curiel stated, "We will continue to stand together until we win the schools our students deserve and the contracts our members deserve."

After multiple days of striking, pressure to reopen schools led to a tentative agreement between the school district and the UESF. The agreement will give San Francisco teachers a 6% salary increase over the next two years and a formulated health care plan with Kaiser. Kaiser will completely cover the teachers' health care costs starting in January of 2027, and the district will cover 50% of the teachers' health care costs starting in July of this year. The final agreement did not completely satisfy the UESF's initial demands, as the deal lacked the initial 9% pay increase and improvements to the workload of special education teachers.

While the teachers' strike is over, the district will continue to face financial issues in the future. The new contract will use up a good portion of the district's emergency reserve fund to cover the first two years of implementing the salary and healthcare cost increases. The district must also calculate the state funding lost during the strike, as state funding is

based on daily student attendance. SFUSD Superintendent Maria Su stated, "We stretched our resources to the limit to get this agreement done. We still have a long way ahead of us where difficult choices remain." The financial stresses on the district will likely prompt restructure and more compromise to combat the district's major financial problems. (Sources: EducationWeek, San Francisco Chronicle)



WALKOUT: Strikers attend protest outside the school.

# LG mosque sparks debate

by **Abby Coven**  
*News Editor*

As the Muslim holy month of Ramadan concludes this week, a Los Gatos mosque has been holding prayer services for members in the early morning and evenings. These gatherings have prompted some nearby residents to express concerns about the mosque's impact on the neighborhood. The mosque, run by the West Valley Muslim Association (WVMA), has a conditional use permit to operate between the hours of 8:00 AM and 10:00 PM. The group applied to extend the permit's hours in order to remain open longer and to better accommodate their members worshipping during Ramadan. Some neighbors object to any permit extension since they already believe the extra traffic, crowds, and noise during this holiday affects safety and causes too many disruptions, while other neighbors remain undisturbed.

Locally, Santa Clara County is home to 60,000 Muslims, and 27% of Bay Area residents practice Islam. The WVMA is a nonprofit mosque that serves the local Muslim community in the West Santa Clara Valley. The group runs three sites in the area: the Los Gatos Islamic Center, the Saratoga Prospect Center, and Saratoga Musalla. The Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses formerly occupied the property, which is zoned for religious use. WVMA Executive Director, Lubna Shaikh, described the mosque as a place where people really "feel at home."

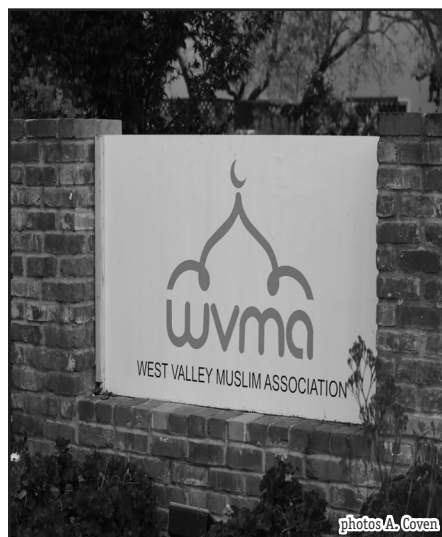
During the Ramadan season, the mosque's membership collectively breaks its fast every night for a month. They use the mosque's existing parking lot, and some parking spills onto the public streets. WVMA has worked to mitigate impacts to the neighborhood surrounding the mosque during the holy month. For example, members quietly direct traffic with flashlights to ensure safety and efficiency. WVMA leadership encourages members to leave quietly in the evenings. In an interview with KTVU Fox News, Shaikh shared, "We just want to get in and out safely. We are not trying to do big events. We are just trying to pray." Officials have yet to decide whether they will amend the permit next year and allow the members to worship until 11:00 PM during Ramadan.

(Sources: ABC7, CBS News, Los Gatos)



DUSK TO DAWN: WVMA applied for an extended permit.

Ramadan is the ninth month of the Islamic calendar during which Muslims around the world engage in fasting, prayer, reflection, charity, and community. The religion is built around empathy for those who are less fortunate, the practice of prayer, self-discipline, and devotion to Allah (God). Ramadan commemorates the moment when Allah revealed the Quran to the Prophet Mohammed. During Ramadan, from dawn to sunset, Muslims abstain from food, drink, and sinful behaviors to honor Allah. This year, Ramadan began at sunset on Feb. 17 and concluded yesterday, Mar. 19.

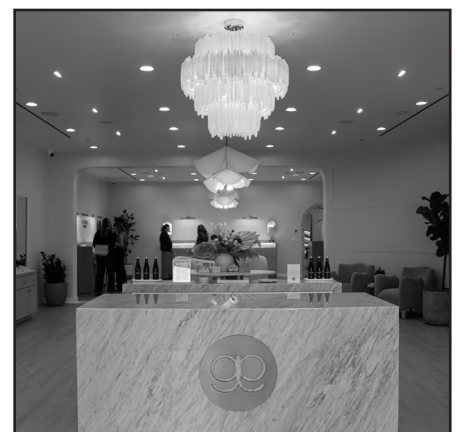


MEETING SPOT: Farley Road is home to many LG Muslims.

# Gorjana comes to town

by **Advika Anand and Tanya Chang**  
*Graphics and Sports Editor*

On Feb. 22, Gorjana, a popular jewelry company, opened one of its largest stores in the heart of Los Gatos. This newest addition to downtown accommodates people of all ages and style preferences, offering jewelry from trendy collections to delicate pieces. While they have a core collection, the store keeps up with trends as well, rotating its merchandise bimonthly; as the store manager, Jacklyn Scheberies, described, they are "always rotating, always changing, always finding something new."



WELCOME IN: Gorjana's entrance entices customers.

The business originated in 2004, when Gorjana and Jason Reidel established their first store in their apartment in Laguna Beach, California. As their company expanded within their hometown, they were able to open a studio, and not long after, a retail store near downtown Laguna. In 2017, the Reidels opened their first store out of state, in New York, marking a significant step for their growing business. Gorjana continues to expand today, with its motto of giving back being the core value of the company, as it makes efforts to support local nonprofit organizations including schools, hospitals, and sports teams.

Out of 120+ stores nationwide, the Los Gatos store location differs in its capacity and beach boho bungalow style. While other Gorjana stores contain a single showroom for all jewelry, this location offers a separate room for their fine collection, dedicated to 14-karat gold pieces. For more affordable options, the rest of their jewelry

is 18-karat gold-plated. So far, the community's response has been overwhelmingly positive, aligning with the company's goal of fostering friendships with their customers. As Scheberies noted, "The people here are truly hidden gems...[I've heard] stories about this town, what it used to be, and what it's growing into." To build on the communal aspect, Gorjana encourages gift-giving with a variety of accessories perfect for any occasion.

Although the jewelry is what catches customers' eyes, they stay in the store for the lovely and efficient workers. Their communication skills are essential to the making a welcoming and "homey" place to shop or chat. Scheberies enthused, "We love talking to everyone that comes through the door. We want to know where your shoes are from, where your coffee is from...stuff like that." These workers assist in any way, especially about what a customer would like to purchase.



BLING BLING: Gorjana's display table for their finest pieces.

The introduction of Gorjana to Los Gatos shows how much of an impact a single company can have on a community. Morgan Burke, a stylist at Gorjana, summed up with the message: "Jewelry is a way to express yourself truly, and it's just a piece of you that you wear every single day." Jewelry provides a creative outlet and this is just the beginning of Gorjana's journey in Los Gatos. Be sure to visit Gorjana, whether you're looking for jewelry or just need a friendly chat!

# News-in-Brief: SF St. Patrick's Day Parade and more

**Measure 13 passes:** Following the preliminary town hall meeting on Dec. 17, 2025 the town and council members alike reconvened for a follow-up meeting on Measure 13, a proposal advocating for the raising of the Pride flag in Los Gatos during the month of June, also known as Pride month. The board tabled the issue after the first meeting. In the next assembly, the council members and town residents had a more

robust discussion. After multiple public testimonials, many from LGHS students like **Nova Jayaraj** and **Lee Cummings**, the council voted to approve Measure 13 for the town of Los Gatos.

- **Nelson Kramer**, *Editor-in-Chief*

**New trans student policies begin:** On Mar. 2, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in favor of a group of religious parents, pausing California's general policy of preventing public schools from informing parents/guardians of their student's transgender identity. California's Attorney General Rob Bonta opposed the ruling, warning, "The consequences of compelling the disclosure of confidential information about their gender identity would be irreversible." California's Governor Gavin Newsom argued, "Teachers should be focused on teaching — not forced to be gender cops."

(Source: NY Times)

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

**San Francisco celebrates St. Patrick's Day:** The annual San Francisco (SF) St. Patrick's Day Parade took place on Mar. 14 around the Civic Center Plaza. In its 175th year, the event is a chance for residents of SF and the surrounding areas to

gather and celebrate the holiday. The United Irish Societies of San Francisco, the parade organizers, themed the celebration "Happy Birthday America" to commemorate the country's 250th anniversary. It was a beautiful day for the crowds to enjoy the sound of bagpipes and the festive spirit.

(Source: ABC News)

- **Megan Saul**, *Editor-in-Chief*

**LG implements homelessness resources program:** In recent years, the number of unhoused people in Los Gatos has been steadily rising. In spite of preventative measures like increased funding and small housing programs churches run around town, homelessness is still an issue that the Town Council is working to improve. Recently, the town announced a federal funding commitment of two hundred thousand dollars that Congressman Sam Liccardo secured to support the Valley Mobile Navigation Center. The van delivers case management, showers, food, laundry, and other critical resources. Unhoused individuals will have access to more resources from the van program, which will hopefully be put in place for the coming year.

- **Siyona Singhal**, *Humor Editor*



SPEAK OUT: LGHS students participate in meeting for raising Pride flag.

- The U.S. and Israel bomb Iran
- President Trump fires Noem

# Texas conducts its preliminary elections for U.S. Senate

by Sahil Muthukrishnan  
Culture Editor

On Mar. 3, Texas held its primary elections for the U.S. Senate. While the state initially seemed unachievable for Democrats, if a few decisions go in their favor, Texas could turn at least partially blue, carrying ramifications for the 2028 presidential election. Nearly 4.5 million Texans voted in the primaries, a statewide record, with a high Democratic turnout, further rallying the state's Democrats.

On the Republican side, incumbent Senator John Cornyn's position looks precarious. The former Texas Attorney General faces strong opposition from current Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton. The fight is an interesting juxtaposition between Cornyn, a cool-headed traditional conservative who has held office since the Bush administration, and Paxton, who is farther to the right and often attracts controversy, with the Texas State House impeaching him for bribery and abuse of power. Despite the candidates' differences, they maintain fervent supporters from factions of the Grand Old Party (GOP). Also in the Republican primary was Wesley Hunt, the Congressional Representative for Texas's 38th district. Though not as popular as Cornyn or Paxton, Hunt collected enough of the

vote, around 13%, to prevent either Cornyn, who received 42.5%, or Paxton, who received 40.8%, from achieving 50% of the vote, triggering a run-off between them set for May 26. The competition between the two remains fierce. The results could have a large effect on the general election, with Cornyn polling better against the Democratic candidate than Paxton.

On the Democratic side, District 30 Representative Jasmine Crockett battled with State Representative James Talarico for the nomination. Many observers thought Talarico's campaign was over after Crockett declared her candidacy, as she is more experienced at the national level and very popular in her district and among Democrats. The battle presented another interesting comparison between Crockett, who is more establishment as a two-term representative who accepted corporate donations, and Talarico, who is more populist, notably taking no corporate Political Action Committee (PAC) money and raising millions of dollars from small individual donations. Talarico clinched the victory, with around 52% of the vote to Crockett's 46%. There is controversy over the results, with Crockett suing Texas after many Dallas voters were turned away from polling stations after the switch from county-wide ballot casting to assigned precincts. The move created confusion and may have disenfranchised voters.

The results of litigation could flip the primary's outcome, but until then, Talarico is the victor.

Excitingly for Democrats, a poll from Public Policy Polling shows Talarico winning against both GOP candidates by slim margins. Though there is still uncertainty about who will be in the general election, it is sure to be competitive.

(Sources: AP, Community Impact, NY Times, Public Policy Polling, Texas Tribune)



FOR THE PEOPLE: Democrat candidate Crockett waves to fans during a parade.

# Trump reappoints DHS head Measles cases in the U.S. rise

by Jane Wilde  
Humor Editor

Although she helped fulfill President Trump's border pledges, Trump fired Kristi Noem on Mar. 5 from the head of Homeland Security position for drawing negative attention to the administration and for her overall handling of the immigration initiative. He has selected Markwayne Mullin, a Republican senator from Oklahoma, to take her place. Noem previously served as South Dakota's governor during the height of the pandemic and as a U.S. congresswoman for four terms before becoming the head of Homeland Security. She is now embarking on the role of Special Envoy for the Shield of America's Western Hemisphere, a position Trump created for her.

The White House told NBC News that Trump revoked her title because of "a culmination of her many unfortunate leadership failures including the fallout in Minnesota, the ad campaign, the allegations of infidelity, the mismanagement of her staff, and her constant feuding with the heads of other agencies, including Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)." The administration proceeded to claim her "drama" distracted U.S. citizens from their immigration mission.

The media scrutinized Noem for many things throughout her time as head of Homeland Security, one of which was a 220 million dollar ad campaign



ENFORCEMENT: ICE officials detain a man facing deportation.

that suggested people leave the country on their own. Noem told Republican Senator John Kennedy that Trump approved the ad; however, the president later told Reuters News that he knew nothing about it. Additionally, she faced immense criticism following the fatal shootings of protesters Renée Good and Alex Pretti, after describing them as "domestic terrorists." Minneapolis mayor, Jacob Frey, wrote "Good Riddance" on social media regarding Noem's discharge from the Homeland Security Department.

Another criticism that led to her demise was her recent defense of an anecdote made in her latest book, where she claimed that she killed her family dog because it was "un-trainable" and "less than worthless." Something that was intended to showcase her ability to make tough decisions was perceived as a heartless and cruel act.

Trump announced that he gave Noem a new role as the Special Envoy for the Shield of America's Western Hemisphere. Soon after, Noem went to X to write: "In this new role, I will be able to build on the partnerships and national security expertise I forged over the last 13 months as Secretary of Homeland Security." Her new job focuses on the eradication of cartels and overall management of migration in the Western hemisphere.

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

by Kat Littfin  
Editorial Editor

Measles, once eliminated in the United States, has recently resurged. While this news seems rather insubstantial in contrast with other events occurring in the nation, the disease's comeuppance implies shifting views on science and politics across the country.

Medical professionals had deemed the respiratory disease eradicated for 25 years up until last spring when doctors noted a resurgence of the disease after it affected a Mennonite community in Texas and soon spread far past the state. Physicians introduced the first iteration of a measles vaccine in 1963, initiating a vast reduction of cases in the following years, especially in the U.S. The measles vaccination is exceptionally effective in preventing the spread of the disease, which is important as measles can be very destructive to a host's immune system and causes complications in one in five unvaccinated individuals. The measles outbreaks in 2025 and 2026 so far are directly linked to declining vaccination rates, as 90% of measles cases in recent years have occurred among unvaccinated people.

In Lubbock County, Texas, where the recent outbreaks originated, the Timmons family has achieved much media coverage over their particular experience with the disease. Five of six family members had to be hospitalized while ill, but eventually all family members had a full recovery. While this family has a positive outlook retrospectively, their behavior towards medicine follows a trend among certain right-wing groups — a distrust of modern medicine and pharmaceuticals. The Timmons family and other measles patients sought treatment from Ben Edwards, a physician who gained prominence for aligning himself with Health Secretary Robert Kennedy Jr. and the Make America Healthy Again (MAHA) movement and advocating against vaccines. Edwards treated patients with natural remedies like cod liver oil and vitamin A, while even falling ill

with the disease himself. While the Timmons family recovered and tout their current health, it took them months to reach full recovery.

With more individuals aligning themselves with the MAHA movement or distrusting health institutions, other unvaccinated communities like the Timmons have similarly been affected, and some patients have not been as lucky as the Timmons and have died in recent outbreaks. During the first three months of 2026, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), physicians have reported 16 outbreaks across the United States. One recent outbreak occurred in an El Paso immigration detention center, where 13 reported cases substantiated lawmakers' concerns about the conditions in the detention centers across the country.

With recent measles outbreaks highlighting the damaging implications of the reappearance of a once eradicated disease and aligning with other important political occurrences in the country, it will be important to follow this occurrence, as medical treatment and policy may soon change to address the disease's resurgence.

(Sources: CDC, NY Times, Piedmont Hospital)



ORIGIN: Residents bustle in Lubbock County, Texas.

# President Trump gives lengthy State of the Union Address

by Quinn Hathaway  
Media Production Editor

President Donald Trump delivered the longest State of the Union Address (SOTU) in U.S. history on Feb. 24, with his speech lasting one hour and forty-seven minutes. The placement of the address in late February allows the holding president to bolster their agenda in attempts to win voters heading into the crucial midterm elections. In his record-breaking address, Trump chose to focus mainly on immigration policy and economic updates.

Trump's first topic in the speech was immigration-based, saying that "in the past nine months, zero illegal aliens have been admitted to the United

States." He followed his extensive monologue with a short statement about how he welcomed legal immigrants, ones that "will work hard to maintain our country," and later shared a myriad of stories reflecting negatively on illegal immigrants, announcing a new bill barring any illegal "aliens" from obtaining licenses to operate commercial vehicles.

Trump proceeded to spend a considerable amount of time discussing the state of the economy prior to his second term in office. Trump stated, "The Biden administration...gave us the worst inflation in the history of our country," a claim that many news stations and economists disproved. Scott Horsley, Chief Economist Correspondent for NPR, noted, "By the time President Joe Biden left office [in 2024], inflation had fallen to 3%," further explaining that inflation dropped to 2.3% last April before returning to 3% in September, halfway through Trump's first year of his second term.

Outside of his economic fallacies and political updates, Trump also addressed the recent Winter Olympics, bringing in the men's Olympic hockey team, who had won gold days prior at the Milano-Cortina Games. Trump himself had called the men's team to invite them to the White House. The call faced immediate backlash online, with many Americans upset that Trump was treating the women's team as not only inferior to the men's team but also as a nuisance. The women's team proceeded to decline Trump's lackluster invitation, though the men's team appeared, with Trump declaring that goalie Connor Hellebuyck will receive the Presidential Medal of Freedom.



STANDING TALL: The House of Representatives Chamber resides in D.C.

In the final moments of his speech, Trump concluded with a patriotic message, emphasizing that "the flame of liberty and independence still burns." Themes of patriotism are already translating into Trump's recent events. The U.S. hosted the Shield of Americas Summit on Mar. 7, which showcased Trump continuing to bolster his America First policies. He highlighted the crackdown on illegal immigration and the increase in economic deals, both major components of his SOTU. As the election season progresses, Trump will likely continue to advocate the policies presented in his lengthy SOTU.

(Sources: NBC, NPR, NY Times, The White House)



EXIT: Trump walks through crowd in the House after delivering his address.

- U.S. launches air strikes on Iran
- Tortoises return to Galapagos

## United States and Israel launch joint air-strikes on Iran

by Atharava Pandey  
Sports Editor

The Feb. 28 attack on Iran has completely changed the outlook of global politics and the economy. After the U.S. and Israel launched joint airstrikes on Iran, Iran responded with missile and drone strikes of its own, striking various targets in the Middle East such as Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Various airports in the region are also closed, and the airspace is now unsafe to fly over. Overall, this war has caused massive changes in the lives of civilians worldwide, showing that this extends far beyond simply the countries involved in the violence.



PROTEST: The American strikes with Israel on Iran have caused outrage.

After the initial attack, Iran has retaliated to the best of its ability. Israeli and regional officials report that Iran has fired more than 180 ballistic missiles toward Israel, while hundreds of additional drones and missiles have targeted locations across the entire Middle East since the conflict began. These strikes have mainly targeted locations linked to U.S. forces, such as the U.S. Fifth Fleet in Bahrain, as well as bases in Qatar, Kuwait, and Iraq. Iran has also attacked major civilian targets in Israel. More specifically, a missile carrying a warhead killed two civilians in the city of Yehud, while more than 2,000 Israelis have been wounded in the Iranian missile attacks.

This war has also intensified Hezbollah's attacks on Israel. From southern Lebanon, Hezbollah has now begun to launch rockets, missiles, and drones, triggering air raid sirens across northern Israel. In addition, Hamas, the terrorist group responsible for the Oct. 7, 2023, attack on Israel, has also voiced its support for Iran by condemning Israel's Zionist attack on the Islamic Republic.

The conflict among Israel, Iran, and the U.S. is going to have strong repercussions on the global economy. For example, Qatar produces around 40% of the world's helium, which is used in semiconductor production. One of the main resources affected by this conflict is energy. Around a quarter of the Earth's oil goes through the Strait of



SPEAK OUT: Mass protests have taken place against the conflict.

Hormuz, a narrow strait that connects the Persian Gulf with the Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea, which ultimately culminates in the Indian Ocean. Unsurprisingly, oil and gas prices have spiked as a result of this. India imports around 40% of its oil through this strait, so the conflict will prompt the government there to develop alternative solutions.

Although President Trump commented on Mar. 9 that the war in Iran is close to ending, Iran has publicly stated they will be the ones to decide when it is over. The Iranian war will continue to have significant effects on a global level. (Sources: AJC, Chatham House)

## Scientists find treatments

by Tanvi Ambekar  
Opinion Editor

In the flurry of current international scientific developments, two separate companies in Japan have recently announced the approval of two new stem cell therapies thought to be effective treatments for severe heart failure and Parkinson's Disease

Both therapies rely on the manipulation of induced pluripotent stem cells (iPS cells), a diverse subset of cells capable of differentiating into any cell in the human body. Naturally, these cells are found only in blastocysts, embryos formed five to seven days after fertilization. The outer layer develops into the placenta while the inner layer, composed almost entirely of pluripotent stem cells, becomes the baby.

Two decades ago, harvesting pluripotent stem cells from a blastocyst would have required killing the embryo. However, in 2006, Professor Shinya Yamanaka of Kyoto University in Japan was the first to create mouse iPS cells. He shared the Nobel Prize in 2012 for his work with fellow scientist John B. Gurdon, and rightfully so; their work opened a new field of stem cell research focused on iPS cells.



TEST: Scientists are researching for stem cell therapies.

Now, Professor Yamanaka's work has seen its first real progression towards applicable therapies. Cuorips, an Osaka-born startup, received legal approval for its heart muscle sheets on Mar. 6, 2026. The treatment, branded as ReHeart, works by replacing dysfunctional heart tissue with new cells. Unlike existing treatments, ReHeart serves as a near-permanent solution for severe heart failure, providing a more effective way to treat once fatal conditions.

The other product, dubbed Amchepry, uses iPS cell-derived brain cells that differentiate into dopamine-producing nerve cells. Late-stage Parkinson's Disease is partially caused by neurons in the brain being unable to synthesize, transmit, and sense dopamine, an important neurotransmitter. Amchepry, developed by Sumitomo Pharma, replaces the faulty cells with functional ones to reduce Parkinson's symptoms. Similar to ReHeart, scientists hope that Amchepry can become an effective remedy for the currently untreatable Parkinson's Disease.

So far, ReHeart has only been tested on eight heart failure patients, all of whom showed symptomatic improvements. Amchepry testing on six patients showed improvement in four, including a reduction in tremors, the main effect of the neurodegeneration in Parkinson's Disease. However, researchers remain hopeful that, with further testing and iteration, both treatments will take significant steps toward Parkinson's and heart failure solutions.

The publicization of ReHeart and Amchepry is a testament to the importance of the constant pursuit of scientific knowledge. The passion of scientists like Yamanaka, Gurdon, and others, is what drives medicine and humanity forward. (Sources: BioInformant, Nature, Nikkei Asia, ScienceDirect, The Japan Times)

## 50 giant tortoises come home

by Jordan Park  
Website Manager

More than a century after they disappeared, Galapagos giant tortoises are finally returning to the islands. Due to the efforts of the Floreana Ecological Restoration Project led by the Galapagos National Park Directorate, a species that has been gone from the islands since 1850 is back.

In late February, rangers from the Galapagos National Park carefully released 50 young tortoises onto Floreana Island, marking the beginning of what conservationists hope will be a historic comeback. The tortoises carried out of crates and placed on dry ground may not look like giants yet, as they are only between seven and 15 years old and weigh about ten to 40 pounds. One day, however, they could grow into the massive, slow-moving creatures that once shaped the island's ecosystem. The released tortoises are not pure descendants of the original Floreana species, but hybrids carrying genes from the now-extinct Floreana tortoise and lineages of tortoises found on Wolf Volcano on nearby Isabela Island. Some of these even carry genetic traces of species from the Santiago and Española islands.

Scientists discovered hidden genetic links between the species in 2008, when researchers working on Wolf Volcano found tortoises with ancestry tied to the Floreana population. That surprising discovery sparked a major conservation effort. In 2017, scientists launched a back-breeding program designed to gradually recover as much of the Floreana tortoise lineage as possible. Researchers selected 23 hybrid tortoises with the strongest genetic connection and began breeding them in captivity on Santa Cruz Island. Since then, the program has produced hundreds of hatchlings, with many now large enough to survive in the wild.

Bringing tortoises back required more than just breeding them. For decades, anthropologically introduced invasive species have damaged the island's ecosystem. Goats, rats, and feral cats devastated native plants and animals, making it impossible for tortoises to survive. Rangers spent years working to remove these species and restore the island's native habitats. This effort is part of the larger Floreana Ecological Restoration project. The project included everything from invasive species removal to mapping plant recovery, managing land use, and addressing conflicts between conservation efforts and the island's residents.

The return of the tortoises is also an essential step in restoring the island because these animals play a major role in shaping their environment. As giant tortoises move across the island, they disperse seeds, clear pathways through vegetation, and help maintain a balance of plant life. This is a significant accomplishment not only for the area but also for island restoration efforts around the world, and, hopefully, if the program succeeds, one of the Galapagos' most famous animals will roam the island again. (Sources: BBC, National Geographic)



RELEASED: Rangers return 50 tortoises to Galapagos.

## World News-in-Brief: Flooding, dinosaurs and more

**Ice block causes hypothermia scare in Canada:** On Mar. 8, 23 men, women, and children headed onto the ice in Georgian Bay, Canada to fish. They realized the ice had moved when they turned around and noticed waves crashing into their ice block. It moved around 1.3 miles away from its starting location while continuing to split into smaller sections. As it was exposed to stronger winds farther from the coast, the ice began picking up speed. Two police helicopters airlifted everyone to safety, with the rescue taking a total of two hours. The only injuries were hypothermia, and everyone is expected to make a full recovery. (Source: NY Times)

-Isabella Langner, Center Editor

**Kenya suffers from flooding:** Kenya is currently experiencing severe rainfall, a recurring event since October of 2025. The rain has created flash floods, causing damage to critical infrastructure including powerlines, homes, schools, and health facilities; these floods have resulted in the deaths of at least 66 civilians. The storm was most destructive in the northeastern, central, and coastal regions, specifically in the country's capital, Nairobi. Kenya Red Cross Secretary-General Ahmed Idris stated, "We are severely limited by the traffic and the situation on what used to be roads. We are doing our best to reach those in need." (Sources: AP News, BBC)

-Megan Saul, Editor-in-Chief



CHARGED: Former President Yoon is facing the death sentence for treason.

**Former South Korean President faces criminal charges:** On Feb. 19, former South Korean President Yoon Suk-Yul, was sentenced to life in prison after being found guilty of insurrection and a failed attempt to impose martial law back in 2024. Yoon's original arrest marks the first time a South Korean president was arrested while still in office. Before the verdict, citizens and some officials called for Yoon to face the death penalty. The disgraced leader is likely to appeal the verdict and is still facing criminal charges for other accusations, such as treason. (Sources: NBC News, NPR)

-Fuyu Banno, Graphics Editor

**Scientists find new dinosaur species:** For the first time in over 100 years, scientists discovered a new species of Spinosaurus dinosaur, a large fish-eating predator that first emerged during the Jurassic period more than 140 million years ago. Unearthed in Niger by an international team of scientists, the Spinosaurus Mirabilis is roughly the size of a Tyrannosaurus Rex and likely had a large, brightly colored scimitar-shaped crest covered in keratin. The search for the new carnivorous dinosaur began with a single-line 1960s monograph which reported a dinosaur tooth finding at a site in Niger. After over 70 years, scientists returned to the site and, several years later, put together the Spinosaurus Mirabilis. (Sources: ABC, NPR)

-Kloe Adams, Games Creator



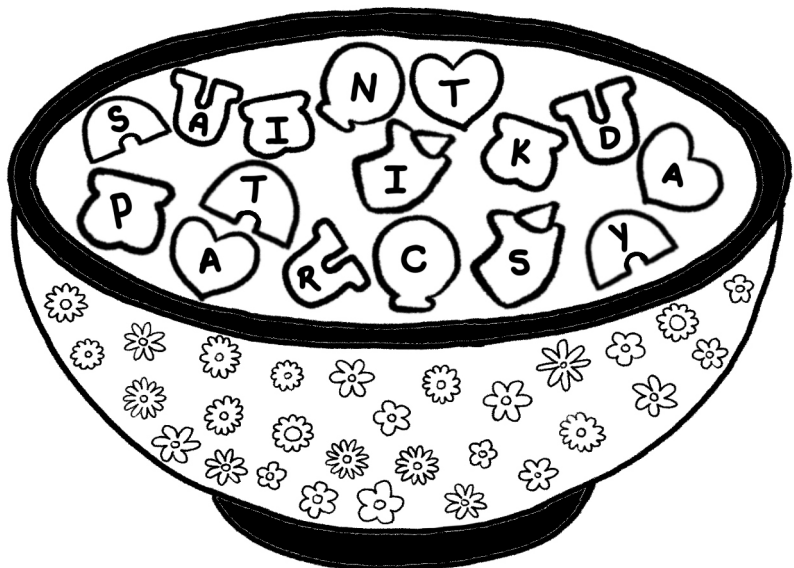
STORM: Flooding in Kenya has caused over 60 deaths and millions in damages.

- Find words in the Lucky Charm Hunt
- Uncover differences in the cartoon

# GAMES

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## LUCKY CHARMS HUNT




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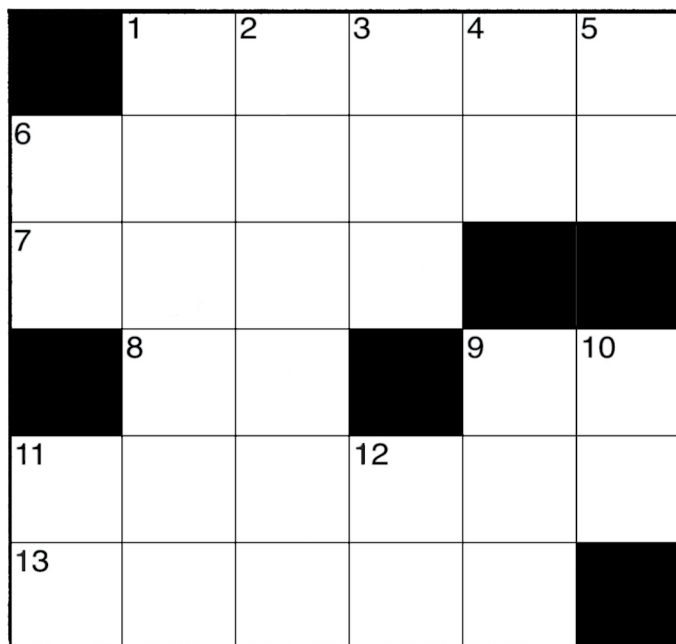
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M. Saul

## MINI CROSSWORD



S. Muthukrishnan

### Down:

1. A four leaved object that grants luck
2. What a disapproving mother might shoot you
3. One's frame, informally
4. Type of light used in a TV remote
5. Home of the Patriots abbreviated
6. Pam Bondi's current position abbreviated
9. Prohibit
10. Good \_\_\_ days
11. Klay Thompson's on court position
12. In other words

### Across:

1. What one rents in Tahoe or Yosemite
6. Democratic Presidential nominee in 2000
7. One might find a pot of this at the end of a rainbow
8. Virginia abbreviated
9. Two-sport star athlete Jackson
11. Number above a barcode on a product
13. Color associated with St. Patrick's Day



## Word Search

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

- Equality
- Suffrage
- Feminism
- Empowerment
- Justice
- Activism
- Leadership
- Courage
- Women
- Reform
- Advocacy
- Protest
- Liberty
- Inclusion
- Solidarity
- Rights
- Trailblazer

A. Singhal

## Word Unscramble

Theme: St. Patrick's Day!

- wbnairo
- miierklc
- shairimn
- kamsrcho
- miiswcahl
- hhorsseeo
- gipbaep
- calige
- cykul

T. Ambekar

## CHAIN CONNECTIONS

New

- Y \_\_\_\_\_
- T \_\_\_\_\_
- H \_\_\_\_\_
- C \_\_\_\_\_
- N \_\_\_\_\_
- T \_\_\_\_\_
- O \_\_\_\_\_
- S \_\_\_\_\_
- Y \_\_\_\_\_

Sale

T. Ambekar

## Spot the 10 Differences



A. Pan



RULES



SOLUTIONS



# EDITORIAL

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- LG must humanize Special Education students

## The LG community must include students with disabilities

by Ivan Habib, Hayley Strahs, and Chloe Wilson  
Website Manager, Editor-in-Chief, and Culture Editor

While LGHS offers extensive support to students with disabilities, other students don't often extend the same effort. Uses of the r-slur and phrases like "that's so SPED" and "Study Skills behavior" are rampant among the student body. The first step to making LGHS a safe space is to cease the use of derogatory and harmful language. However, not all integration efforts are created equal; students must ensure they treat their classmates with dignity as opposed to alienating them through excessive attention. LGHS students should make an intentional effort to avoid patronizing other students and promote integration of students in the Special Education program within the LGHS community.

Some students enrolled in the Study Skills course at LGHS have noticed an increase in offensive language when students in Study Skills or students who have learning disabilities are not present. Although these students may not be nearby to hear the offensive language, treating students with dignity even when they are not around helps build a trusting, caring community at LGHS. Junior **Ruby Currie** described how students treat Study Skills enrollees differently: "I think that teachers do not treat students any differently, but with peers, there is a stereotype surrounding people in Study Skills." Currie added: "I don't think students realize how using offensive phrases can affect students because oftentimes Study Skills is not an optional class for students, it is a necessity for their learning." The jokes, Currie claimed, are usually said when students in study skills are not around, as there would be more consequences if they were to say the jokes to them directly. It is imperative to recognize the impact of words, and the spread of hate across campus can negatively impact every student's learning experience.

Senior **Sage Cobb** participates in hybrid schooling, taking two classes online and two in person. Three of their four courses are APs. Cobb reflected,

"People don't always expect me to be a good student or be able to do AP classes, but I do." Kids and adults often underestimate people with disabilities, treating them as if they were younger, having less maturity and less intelligence. While people don't frequently infantilize Cobb in high school, they are no stranger to coddling remarks: "It's kind of awkward, especially coming from other students. It's like, 'I'm in your grade, I'm your age, just treat me like I am.'" To students outside of the Special Education program, Cobb implored, "Treat us like normal people

because that's what we are. We are normal people, we just have needs that are a little bit different from what a person who's not in special education might need, and that's how we should be seeing people in special education."

This infantilization is not always conscious but can instead stem from our mental preconceptions of others' abilities as less than our own. LGHS teacher **Kimberly Burlinson** has been teaching for over 29 years. This year, she is teaching both Strategic Learning and Biology. In the environment of the

science lab, Burlinson sees firsthand how a fear of a lower grade leads students to sideline their peers with disabilities. She noted, "I'll hear kids say things like, 'Well, I don't want them to mess up our lab, so I'm just not going to let them do it.'" She stresses the need not to fear failure and instead to treat an experience as an "opportunity to be like, I could help this person become better at doing things just by being kind and by letting them try." Fostering a sense of connection with people of differing experiences requires a level of intentionality that people often overlook. Burlinson explained, "We automatically step to judgment, but if we could pause and be like, 'Oh, that kid is probably having a really hard time right now. I wonder if I could just remind them that they can help make their path a little bit easier.'" We must make the conscious effort to understand the reasons they act differently and be thoughtful with that in mind. Burlinson shared a poignant story of one of her prior students with Tourette's syndrome who presented to her class "about what it means to have Tourette's. ... [He explained] that 'my tics just mean I am learning because I'm not trying to control my tics.' After that, the students, instead of thinking he was weird or different or othering him, were like 'Oh, I totally get it.'" It is necessary to realize that by approaching someone with curiosity rather than aversion, members of the LGHS community can move past superficial interactions and towards genuine understanding.

We must stop viewing our differences — whether physical or mental — as justification for condescension or exclusion, but instead as an opportunity to learn from other perspectives. By moving beyond derogatory and stereotypical labels and, rather, choosing kindness over cruelty we can turn LGHS into a truly inclusive environment. We must stop looking down on peers with differing abilities, and, as Cobb put it, "treat us like normal people because that's what we are."



A. Anand



### MARCH/APRIL

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
22	23 Badminton vs. Santa Clara	24 Track and Field at Los Altos	25 Girls' Softball vs. Mountain View	26 Boys' Lacrosse vs. Stevenson	27 Swim vs. Palo Alto	28
29	30 Spirit Week Begins	31 Track and Field at Gunn	1 April Fools' Day	2 Boys' Baseball at St. Ignatius	3 Spring Spirit Rally	4
5 Easter	6 Spring Break	7 Spring Break	8 Spring Break	9 Spring Break	10 Spring Break	11
12	13 Girls' Lacrosse at Los Altos	14 Boys' Freshman Baseball vs. Milpitas	15 Boys' Volleyball vs. Harker	16 Boys' Tennis vs. Palo Alto	17 Girls' Varsity Lacrosse at Stevenson	18
19	20	21	22 Earth Day	23	24	25



F. Banno

3/20/26

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# OPINION

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## Give U.S. citizens paid time off for voting day

by Sahil Muthukrishnan  
Culture Editor



In a time when the United States faces extreme political divisions, voting is one of the most crucial tools U.S. citizens can utilize to make their opinion heard. These days, Americans face far too many barriers when they go to the polls. While states like California make extensive efforts to diversify voters' options, residents of many other states don't receive the same privilege. Lawmakers in D.C. should require businesses to provide paid time off on Election Day to increase voter turnout and improve the electorate's representation.

Election Day is always on the first Tuesday of November. Back in the 1800s, this made some sense. Lawmakers reasoned that voters would not travel on the weekend because of the Sabbath. This schedule would then force electors to travel all of Monday to the nearest polling location so they could vote the next day, Tuesday.

Nowadays, voting on Tuesday places a burden on the electorate. Voters often have to take time off work, losing wages just to stand in long lines or have their polling stations changed at the

last second, requiring them to rush to another location. Texas lawmakers prompted a situation like this during the Democratic primary for the U.S. Senate in Texas. State legislators decided to disregard the long-standing tradition of county-wide ballot casting and instead restricted voters to their assigned precinct polling locations. This move turned voters away from their usual polling options and created widespread confusion. Situations such as these would be largely avoidable if the electorate were given ample time to vote earlier in the day, rather than being forced to vote at the last minute when they get off work.

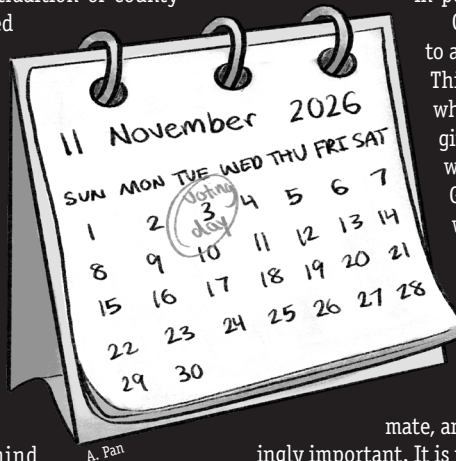
Voting's high barrier to entry is reflected in Census Bureau data, with 17.8% of people citing being too busy as the reason they did not vote in the 2024 election, the second most often stated reason, only behind "not being interested."

While all states have some form of absentee voting, 14 require a legal excuse, while another 28 place the responsibility

on the voter to request a ballot. Only eight states automatically send citizens a ballot. At least until we can create a widespread system of mail-in voting, we urgently require a more concrete system of in-person voting.

Currently, only 22 states require businesses to allot paid time to the electorate for voting. This is wildly insufficient. When someone who is surviving paycheck to paycheck is given the choice between losing hours of wages and voting, the choice seems obvious. Guaranteed paid time off in all 50 states would nullify this issue, giving employees the freedom to exercise their right to vote. This would undoubtedly spike turnout, as the reason almost one-fifth of voters stated for their lack of involvement would be eliminated.

With the U.S.'s tumultuous political climate, an individual's right to vote becomes increasingly important. It is the lawmakers' duty to make sure that our citizens are heard. Guaranteeing paid time off during Election Day is a crucial step in enfranchising millions of voices we may not otherwise hear. (Sources: AP News, EBSCO, NY Times, U.S. Census Bureau)



## Make languages accessible

by Tanvi Ambekar  
Opinion Editor



In 2024, only 43% of public schools in the United States taught one or more world languages as independent courses, with Spanish, French, and ASL being the most common. However, as of

2026, U.S. inhabitants speak more than 350 languages, including Tagalog, Arabic, and Vietnamese. Studies have shown that language learning improves learning capability, cultural connection, and even brain health. As an institution, the U.S. public education system should be doing more to ensure American children have the opportunity to benefit from these practices. The standardized education system in the United States should provide more opportunities for students to learn a variety of world languages.

Language learning has numerous health benefits. For example, a study from King's College showed that learning a second language increased grey-matter density in the brain region tied to language and vocabulary, meaning the child's native language also improved. Similarly, the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis argues that the language a person speaks influences their perception of abstract concepts. Therefore, the more languages a person knows, the more nuanced and well-rounded their worldview will be. By teaching this skill to American youth, we can equip the next generation with the diverse perspectives needed to critically analyze real-world issues.

Furthermore, studies have shown that bilingualism delays the onset of dementia; one study from 2013 revealed that bilingual patients developed dementia 4.5 years later than monolingual ones. Although the exact hypotheses for why this happens varied across subgroups, the pattern was clear: the mental exercise of speaking another language strengthens the brain enough to limit the effects of neurodegeneration. If the education system builds this mental strength earlier on, every child will be at lower risk for such disorders.

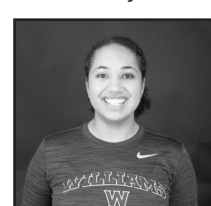
Learning a language is much easier when students are young, so elementary schools are a better target for reforms. A study of approximately 669,000 people showed that the ability to learn grammar proficiently declines with age, and fluency is much easier if one starts young. If the U.S. wants children to take advantage of their neuroplasticity, it should offer world language courses early to provide the aforementioned benefits.

Overall, the education system is not so much failing as it is insufficient. 82% of public high schools offer at least one world language course, but only 20% of elementary schools do. To take advantage of children's synaptic adaptability, education standards should mandate that elementary, middle, and high schools offer at least one world language course to students. In addition, schools should advertise the numerous benefits of multilingualism to both students and parents. By implementing these changes, we would offer the next generation better opportunities and neural health. (Sources: Alliance for International Exchange, American Councils for International Education, European Commission, National Library of Medicine, Nature)



## End the pooping stigma

by Hayley Strahs  
Editor-in-Chief



Most kids don't poop at school. For some, it's not wanting to miss class; for most, it's an issue of comfort. Being a teenager, I laughed at pooping and poop-related jokes before I witnessed a girl get bullied

to the point of tears in the bathroom. Pooping at school puts you in a vulnerable position, and as ridiculous as it may seem, members of the LGHS community must help students feel less anxious in the bathroom through removing the stigma surrounding poop and promoting anti-odor practices.

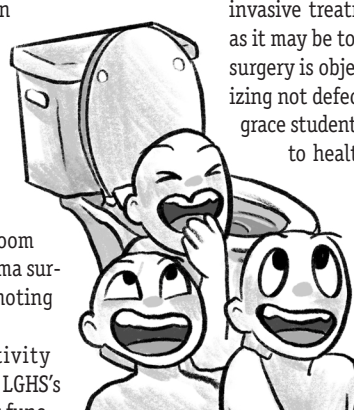
While a poop-positivity movement may not be in LGHS's future, this natural bodily function shouldn't be a source of shame. Inquiring "are you pooping in there?" to your friends while they're in the bathroom might be funny, but asking strangers the same question is highly inappropriate. Yes, this should be self-explanatory, but I've watched this exact scenario countless times. The bathroom should be a safe space, and what students do in the stall is entirely their business. I am in no way advocating against all potty humor, but we must keep it within our social circles so as to not alienate others. There is a fine line between bullying and

joking with friends, and it is crucial to not cross it.

Moreover, refusal to defecate at school puts students at risk for health ramifications. According to a study in the Journal of School Health, 42% of K-12 school nurses cited bullying as the reason for kids' not wanting to poop at school, leading to 95% of nurses reporting, at minimum, monthly cases of constipation. And as unsettling as it may seem, constipation is the gateway to more severe health complications like hemorrhoids, fecal impaction, and rectal prolapse, all of which can have highly invasive treatment procedures. As nerve-racking as it may be to poop at school, enduring an invasive surgery is objectively much more awkward. Normalizing not defecating at school isn't the social saving grace students often think it is; it's a slippery slope to health problems.

Unfortunately, the stigma surrounding poop isn't baseless. Without sugarcoating it, poop stinks. However, LGHS students can easily circumvent this issue by employing scent-reduction tactics. The double flush is a valuable tactic: don't wait until the end to flush the toilet and instead do so two or three times as you go. Moreover, portable air fresheners like Poo-Pourri are easy to use and prevent foul odor from escaping the toilet. Simply flushing the toilet and waiting a couple minutes for the smell to subside is also an option. Through handling the odor issue, students will feel less awkward using the bathroom at LGHS.

With constipation triggering invasive health problems and smelly stools having numerous work-arounds, pooping at school shouldn't carry the stigma it does. (Sources: Healthline, Journal of School Health)



## Anand campaigns for AI literacy in online media

by Advika Anand  
Graphics Editor



Since 2024, generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) video technology has improved immensely in both quality and accessibility. Tools such as OpenAI's Sora, Luma Dream Machine, and Runway Gen-3 have made it possible to create artificially generated video clips that are highly realistic, longer, and more coherent than ever before,

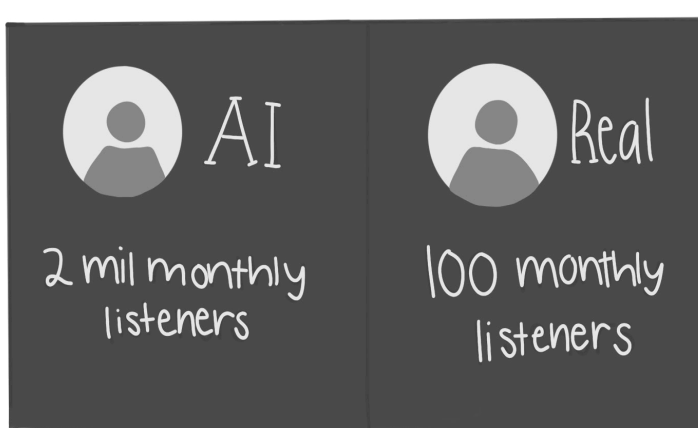
making it difficult to distinguish between what is real and what is not. These videos appear frequently in advertisements, social media content, professional television production, and more. This brings up the vital question: Should these videos have grounds to exist in the first place, and what kinds of regulations should be imposed to minimize their online presence and the following outcomes? Because of this, individuals must be more aware of the content they consume online and be wary of AI that is harder to recognize, and social media users in particular should refrain from using and promoting AI-generated content/videos.

A prime example of deceptive AI is Sienna Rose, a widely known AI-generated musical artist. Although she is not human, she has a myriad of social media posts in her name that promote her music, with many people falling for this charade. Rose also has a sizable fan base, with around 3.3 million monthly listeners on Spotify.

Clearly, this "user" is deceiving viewers and spreading misinformation about her true identity and the operation's intent. Social media platforms should not, in any way, allow this to happen. Not only does it undermine a site's authenticity, but it also targets susceptible individuals. These sites have countless users who dedicate time and money to watching their videos, and they cannot continue to be misinformed, especially regarding politics or health advice. Moreover, platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube should do a better job of labeling these AI-generated videos as a means to counteract the inaccurate messages they send.

Furthermore, AI art unfairly competes with human musicians, filmmakers, and designers who require months or even years to produce their authentic work. Engaging with these AI videos online only

exacerbates the situation by further overlooking the human innovation needed to succeed in these fields. As graphic designer Grace Warren pointed out, "Feeling threatened by AI is a real thing, you are competing against it, and it makes you feel extra pressure to do even better."



authenticity online is preserved, and that starts with acknowledging and eradicating AI-generated content from our daily lives. (Sources: BBC, Imgix, Psychology Today)

# Protect the right to protest

by Abby Coven  
News Editor



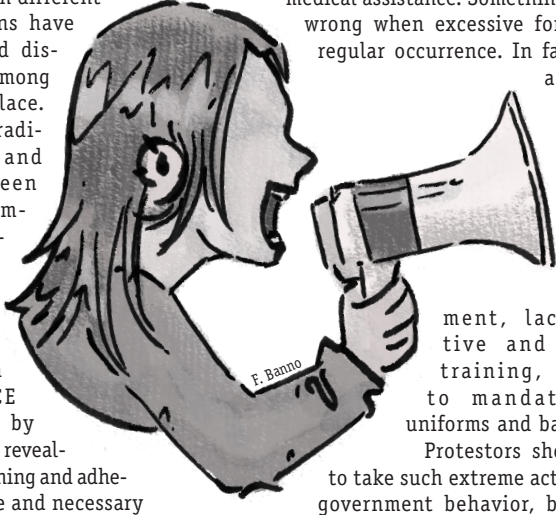
The United States was born from revolution; its constitution has always protected civil liberties, including the right to protest. Recently, however, the alarms of our democracy are ringing as the U.S. barrels toward authoritarianism. Over the past year, the Trump administration has used the Department of Homeland Security to implement anti-immigration policies by deploying Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents in different cities. ICE's actions have caused widespread discontent and fear among the general populace. Many feel that traditional protests and marches have been ineffective in combating Trump's policies and have thus escalated their tactics of resistance. During the intense protests in Minneapolis, ICE agents escalated by killing two citizens, revealing their lack of training and adherence to appropriate and necessary law enforcement practices.

Our government must honor the tenets of the U.S. Constitution and actively preserve the right to protest. Seventeenth-century philosopher John Locke inspired the founding fathers' thinking about principles like natural rights and the right of revolution. Locke believed that citizens are obligated to resist when they recognize government injustices. In fact, history shows that protests are among the most effective ways of moving a country

forward and gaining traction for important rights for its citizens, such as through the women's suffrage and Civil Rights movements.

In the halls of government and on the streets, the Trump administration is hindering the rights of citizens to resist with the aim of silencing those who object to its actions and policies. During the Minneapolis protests against ICE, the ICE agents perceived Alex Pretti as a threat. The government can impose reasonable limits on protest and lawfully disable threats. However, even after ICE agents removed the gun from Pretti's holster, they proceeded to shoot him ten times, killing him. ICE agents also prevented another protester from offering Pretti any medical assistance. Something is profoundly wrong when excessive force becomes a regular occurrence. In fact, the Trump administration is essentially approving ICE's reckless behavior through rapid and careless recruitment, lack of effective and meaningful training, and failure to mandate standard uniforms and badges.

Protestors should not have to take such extreme actions to oppose government behavior, but, for many, these challenging times call for it. The citizens of Minneapolis moved beyond marches and engaged in a series of diverse resistance tactics including general business strikes, barricades to slow traffic and identify federal vehicles without fully blocking access, and whistle warning systems to alert neighbors of ICE activity. The right to protest in the U.S. is in our collective DNA, and we must continue to breathe life into this crucial civil liberty. (Sources: NY Times, CNN, Washington Post)



F. Banno

# Support GMO technology

by Tanya Chang  
Sports Editor



Over the past century, many advances in agriculture have allowed for a drastic increase in worldwide food production. However one thing seems unchangeable: world hunger. Millions of people worldwide still lack access to food due to poverty and climate change. With rising global temperatures and extreme weather conditions becoming more common, old farming methods are now barely managing to meet food demands. Genetically modified organisms (GMOs) are a very powerful scientific tool that supports food systems. Governments must invest in and regulate GMO technology to make it accessible to where there is a lack of food around the world.

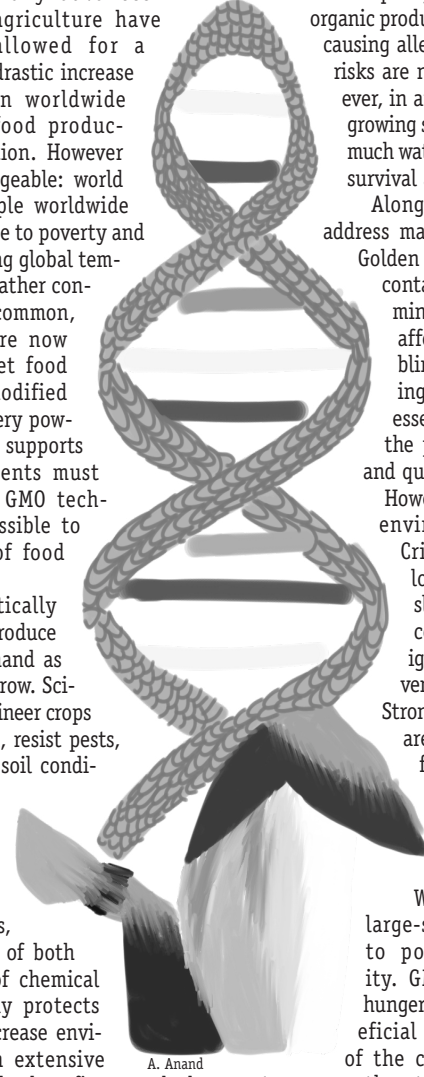
GMOs can help drastically increase the amount of produce to keep up with the demand as populations continue to grow. Scientists are now able to engineer crops that can tolerate drought, resist pests, and survive in the worst soil conditions. The National Geographic Society states the purpose of modified crops, like Bt corn, is to produce a protein that is toxic to specific insects, leading to the reduction of both yield loss and the use of chemical pesticides. This not only protects harvests but can also decrease environmental damage from extensive pesticide use. Despite the benefits, people have joined to form an anti-GMO movement raising ethical concerns about human health and the

environment. They often initiate boycotts with certain companies, marches to spread awareness, and lobbying where they work with other businesses to influence policy. Supporters advocate for natural, organic produce, as the thought of GMO products causing allergies or other unknown long term risks are not worth potential benefits. However, in areas where drought destroys entire growing seasons, GMOs that do not require as much water can mean the difference between survival and famine.

Along with production, GMO can also address malnutrition. One example includes Golden Rice, which has been altered to contain beta-carotene, a source of vitamin A. Globally, vitamin A deficiency affects millions of children, causing blindness or even death. By establishing a few staple crops that contain essential nutrients, biotechnology has the potential to improve the quantity and quality of accessible food.

However, some argue that GMOs have environmental and economic risks. Critics worry about the unknown long-term health effects and the slow decline in biodiversity. These concerns should not be completely ignored but they also should not prevent a discovery that has vast benefits. Strong oversight and transparent testing are necessary to ensure safety and fairness. The World Health Organization has labeled GMO foods safe to eat after decades of research. The solution is not to reject but to regulate.

World hunger is a complex, large-scale issue due, in large part, to poverty and political instability. GMOs alone will not solve world hunger, but refusing to use such a beneficial tool can diminish the urgency of the crisis. Climate change continues to pose a threat to global agriculture, which is why innovation must be part of our response. (Sources: National Geographic Society, PMC, WHO)



A. Anand

# Littfin advocates for taking unconventional electives

by Kat Littfin  
Editorial Editor



Los Gatos High School offers a plethora of electives for students to choose from throughout their high school career. Popular choices include advanced academic courses, particularly Advanced Placement (AP) classes. However, certain undervalued elective options offer students a reprieve from an onslaught of AP classes, teach them valuable traits, and allow them to delve more deeply into their passions. The school administration and student body should encourage the enrollment of more niche courses to allow students to explore their interests and build life skills.

While academic courses may be the norm, LGHS offers several electives including drawing, painting, ceramics, multimedia, digital photography, fashion design, graphic design, manufacturing technology, business, drama, leadership, and journalism, all of which teach essential traits that extend far beyond the classroom. Senior Sarah Jacobson decided to take Clothing/Fashion Design because she was intrigued by 3D art and fashion, and she has gained much from this experience, explaining, "I feel like sewing has...taught me to be more patient. I want to be a nurse, and patience is a skill I'm definitely going to need." While not a STEM class, classes

like Fashion can play a pivotal role in developing traits that students can use in other facets of their lives.

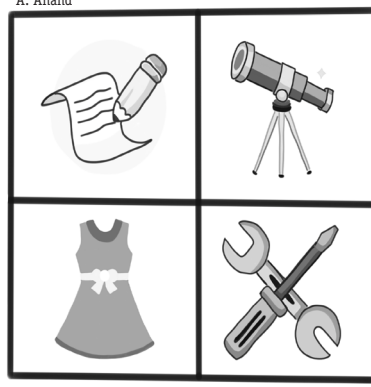
Many academic, non-AP courses often lack student sign-ups due to the constant pressure to build a college resume. Still, non-advanced electives provide students with less stressful opportunities to learn more about topics that spark their curiosity. One course that has not yet been instituted as an option is Astronomy. The class would have elements of physics and earth science at a non-AP level. Physics teachers have polled students in Chemistry and Physics classes over the past two years, and a quarter of students have shown interest in enrolling. However, administrators worry that adding the class will create an imbalance of STEM electives. Despite this view, the already existing STEM electives are mostly AP classes, whereas Astronomy would offer an option for students drawn to physical sciences without the added stress of another AP course.

A formerly popular non-STEM elective was Creative Writing which Kristen Austin created and formerly taught. Unfortunately, a lack of student enthusiasm after the pandemic caused the course to phase out as an option. Austin described that before the pandemic, the class was a uniting and constructive environment where both non-academic and

academic students eagerly collaborated. However, over the past few years, Austin noticed that fewer students signed up for the class and, to her dismay, began depending on AI's "creativity" instead of their own. Classes like Creative Writing offer students an environment to develop their artistic abilities and connect with students with whom

they may not otherwise work, but students must learn to make use of these opportunities when they are available instead of taking them for granted.

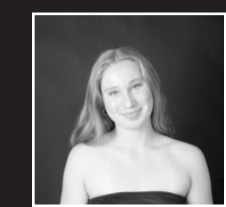
Although there are some things the administration can do to broaden the elective choices students have, the responsibility ultimately falls on students to take the initiative to enroll in classes they are interested in. As Elective Department Chair Emily Christie pointed out, "If students want to maintain their diverse elective options, they have to sign up for them. We build the schedule around students' requests. Students should consider choosing an elective that sounds fun and challenging to them, not just one that will potentially boost their GPA." In a community where so many students try to accrue as many AP classes as possible, stand out by taking an elective that actually interests you, and that will help you build skills you will utilize throughout your lifetime.



A. Anand

# Religion should be separated from rehabilitation programs

by Sam Gruetter  
Editor-in-Chief



Regarding support groups for those with substance abuse disorders, "anonymous" comes to mind: Alcoholics Anonymous (AA), Narcotics Anonymous (NA), Overeaters Anonymous (OA), among others. While these groups have undoubtedly helped some individuals overcome their addiction, their methodology is far from clinical. Many of these groups manipulate spiritual language and use religion as a medium for recovery, an approach that can skew one's perception of religious doctrines as well as make the religion inextricable from the concept of addiction. Therefore, when seeking support groups in the process of recovery, non-religious individuals should prioritize secular, research-based programs and medical-assisted treatment (MAT).

The first step one must take in these "anonymous" programs is to accept that one's willpower is insufficient for recovery, as AA's Big Book argues: "Our human resources, as marshalled by the will, were not sufficient; they failed utterly." This philosophy obligates dependence on the program rather than on oneself, producing an unhealthy reliance on others and a lack of personal autonomy within the recovery process. Instead

of approaching addiction as what it is — deregulated dopamine systems, overactive stress systems, and the weakening of executive control network — these support groups frame it in the context of morality, essentially rejecting all medical treatment options. Instead, these programs insist that addicts surrender "to a Power greater than yourself which will solve your problem."

Treatment programs such as AA have a varying range of success rates because participating in the program relies heavily on the individual, and it is extremely decentralized. In contrast, medical treatment rewires the brain's craving system, with studies showing that medical intervention has a higher retention rate, whereas AA only has about a 5-8% success rate. Overall, research has proven that MAT lowers the risk of overdose, increases treatment retention and survival rates, decreases substance-related criminal activity, lowers relapse rates, and has a faster onset of benefits.

For those who lack a religious background, programs such as Alcoholics and Narcotics Anonymous distort religious doctrines and manipulate spiritual language to make it applicable

to the recovery process, thus undermining the religion's merit. Many religious figures have concerns about how programs such as NA and AA blur the lines between therapy and religious practice.

By using ambiguous language, AA treats all spiritual beliefs as interchangeable, rejecting the nuance and historical complexity behind individual faiths. This manipulation of faith risks producing spiritual commitment void of doctrine or accountability. Similarly, the function of these groups as a quasi-religion can make addiction inextricable from religious identity for members, two things that should never be mutually influential. (Sources: NTORS, FasPsych)



A. Anand

# EL GATO



Welcome to the first-ever El Gato Hunger event inspires the hearts of our town's residents. It chronicles the fight for the top spot among the four districts, representatives from each team will

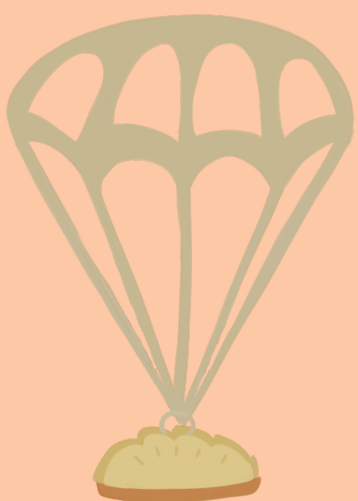
This year, the pageantry is particularly grand, with an abundance of color as a way to single out their styles. Fun hues and flair, because the competition is fierce. Toward victory and may the odds be ever in your favor.

**-Nelson Kramer,**

## DISTRICT ONE: PAGES 1-5

District one will certainly come out on top; our breaking news and information-gathering abilities will crush the competition. Between the pages of local, national, and world news, we have the most experience in unearthing stories at record times and gathering accurate, reliable information as the clock ticks down. Our writers from Local know every corner, alley, and event that occurs in Los Gatos. Our National and World editors are adept at finding information and resources from the most reliable sources. Our knowledge and determination in new situations will help us produce the best articles and win this competition. District one does not need to worry, as with our consistent investigative work, we will definitely win this competition.

**-Noah Gloege, *World Editor***



## DISTRICT TWO: PAGES 6-9

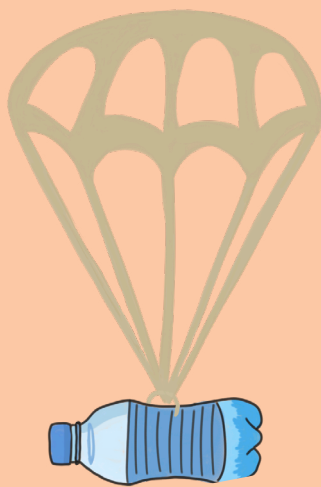
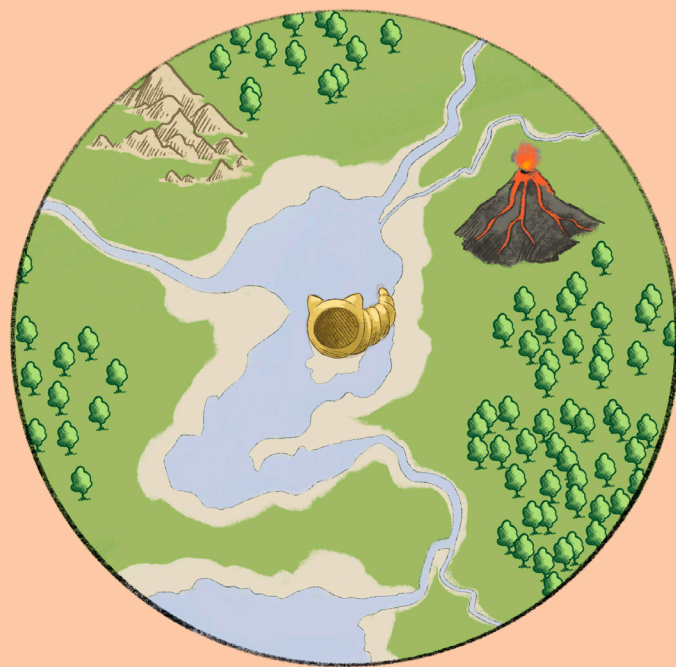
Legend Effie Trinket once said, "May the odds be ever in your favor!" District two, with its creative Games section, thought-provoking editorial, and persuasive opinions have the traits to take down all the other districts. Basic booby traps do not make the cut anymore, which is why competitors need ingenious ambushes only someone with the creativity of a Games creator could design. Additionally, the Editorial section offers a strong leader with the communication and collaborative skills that will guide our district as one cohesive unit. Lastly, the Opinion section, constantly working to prove themselves, will stop at nothing to finish what they start. District two does not need hope; with our invaluable assets, the odds are already in our favor.

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

# GAMES

r Games. Soon to be an annual tradition, this and energizes the journalistic community as e many sections of El Gato. Separated across will tell us why they think their group will win. with each district dressing themselves in an styles and techniques. But do not be fooled by erce! Good luck to each district in their fight odds be ever in your favor.

, *Editor-in-Chief*



## DISTRICT THREE: PAGES 12-15

I can't believe the other districts think they stand a chance. Humor and Culture editors might be the most skilled people on the paper. Every press week, they battle with graphics, go hand-to-hand with frustrating formatting errors, and deal with four different versions of the phrase, "Spoilers ahead." Humor editors are by far the funniest people on the paper; they will easily gain sponsors and make alliances (whom they will, of course, betray later). Culture editors are silent warriors; let your guard down once, and suddenly all your personal information has somehow traveled to every tribute, including news of that weird rash on your back. I wish everyone else luck, because they stand no chance against us.

-Siyona Singhal, *Humor Editor*

## DISTRICT FOUR: PAGES 16-20

There's no question that District four is winning these games. Think about it: the Sports editors are going to be faster and stronger than everybody else. They understand pressure and conflict, as they have experienced covering high-stakes stories on a monthly basis. Furthermore, the People editors know how to expertly manipulate the other teams, harnessing their social skills. Together, the Sports and People sections provide the perfect combination of strength, intelligence, and charisma. In the end, this won't be close, as this district will rise above the rest and tower over the competition.

-Atharava Pandey, *Sports Editor*

- Mitchell overviews the new Scream movie
- Singhal overviews J. Cole's new album

# CULTURE

EL GATO • FRIDAY, MARCH 20, 2026 • LOS GATOS HIGH SCHOOL • WWW.ELGATONEWS.COM

## LANGNER DISCUSSES THE THIRD SEASON OF SCHOOL SPIRITS

by Isabella Langner  
Center Editor

Back for its third season, School Spirits has added new characters, plotlines, and settings that expand the story, providing answers and backstories to the many series' mysteries. Season three debuted on Jan. 28, following its pattern of annual seasons since 2023. The consistent release of eight episodes has kept fans engaged without forgetting what happened in the previous finale.

School Spirits resumes right where season two ended, bringing viewers straight back into Split River with instant action. Simon, Maddie's friend from the living world, is sucked into the ghost world, swapping places with Maddie. The main focus of the show then shifts onto recovering Simon while diving into the history of the town and the ghosts. The characters discover secret buildings under both Split River High School and the hospital in an attempt to find what brought Simon to the spirit realm, showing there are many more spirits and secrets from hundreds of years ago. While not revealing many answers to why yet, the show identifies a higher power or spirit trapping ghosts from crossing over. The show maintains a fast tempo, creating new

stakes to keep viewers on edge. There are threats to Split River High, and a demolition would restrict ghosts from crossing over to whatever lies beyond death.

Another aspect of School Spirits that successfully continued into this season is the well-rounded character development. By introducing new characters, the show expands various main character arcs while exploring new traumas within the unfamiliar faces. Rhonda, one of the school ghosts, tackles her fear of depending on another by taking on a new love interest, Maddie explores her fear of failure through confiding in Xavier, and the show finally uncovers Mr. Martin's backstory.

School Spirits is identifiable through its unique filming style, featuring close-up shots during

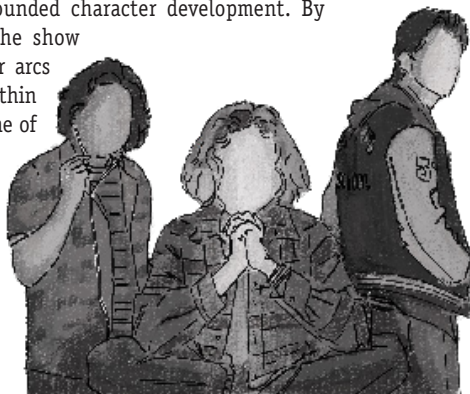
conversations and intense moments, bringing viewers directly into the eyeline of the characters. This creates a sense of intimacy and privacy during scenes, preventing emotional topics and heated moments from falling flat. These intense camera movements, coupled with passionate

music, allow the show's horror scenes to provoke fear.

Despite including lighthearted humor, School Spirits does not shy away from inspiring nightmares.

While providing entertainment through action and mystery, the show tackles an important question among humans: What happens after we die? Although the show has given no answer, as "the beyond" is left ambiguous, School Spirits sparks conversation among viewers about what lies beyond. As the ghosts debate difficult choices between remaining trapped at the school or moving on, the show pushes viewers into thought-provoking conversations.

If you are looking for a show that has mystery, romance, humor, action, and horror, School Spirits is the right choice.



F. Banno

## MITCHELL REVIEWS SCREAM

by Kayla Mitchell  
Public Relations Manager

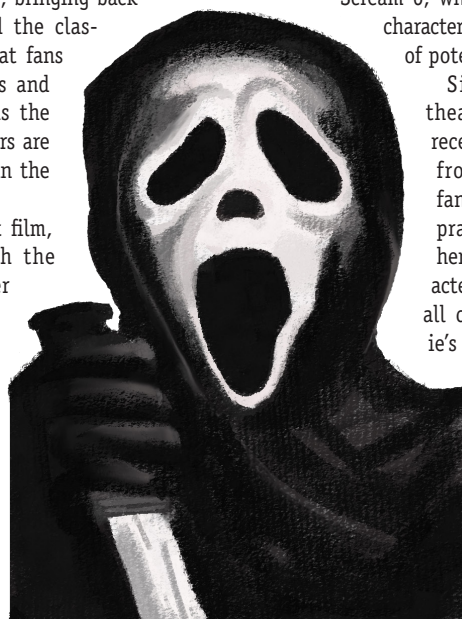
Continuing to fill theaters with thrilling films this spring, legendary screenwriter Kevin Williamson introduced another sequel to the long-running Scream franchise. Scream 7 came out in theaters on Feb. 27, bringing back the iconic Ghostface and the classic stab-horror themes that fans love. With new characters and Williamson taking over as the director of the film, viewers are getting a fresh start within the popular horror series.

At the end of the last film, audiences were left with the survival of the Carpenter sisters after stopping the Ghostface killers who were hunting Sam Carpenter to avenge their dead family member. Following the departure of directors from the previous film and the firing of Melissa Barrera, who portrayed the main character Sam, popular actor Jenna Ortega did not return

for Scream 7. The loss of the two main actors marked the end of the Carpenter sisters' storyline. Despite the loss of stars from the last installment, the new cast is filled with talent, with well-known teenage actor McKenna Grace and returning actors Neve Campbell, Isabel May, and Mason Gooding.

Departing from the storyline of the Carpenter sisters, the new film focuses on legacy character Sidney Prescott. When Ghostface returns and begins threatening Sidney's family, especially her daughter Tatum, she is forced to relive the traumatic events from her past and face the Ghostface killer to protect her family. The film focuses on Sidney's personal story as she

attempts to establish a normal life after the traumatic events in her past, but she is quickly thrown back into the horror to end the attacks once and for all. The killer targets characters involved in past Ghostface attacks, such as returning characters Gale, Mindy, and Chad from Scream 6, while introducing new characters to broaden the pool of potential suspects.



F. Banno

Since arriving in theaters, the film has received mixed reviews from the franchise's fans. Many critics are praising Campbell for her return as lead character Prescott, but overall criticizing the movie's repetitive elements and lackluster killer reveal. The movie's success is also being affected by boycotts from the fans due to the loss of stars from Scream 6 and the departure of past

directors. Rotten Tomatoes gave the movie a critics' score of 32% and an audience score of 77%, showing a mostly positive reaction from viewers. Despite any negative criticism, the film has already generated a worldwide total of 97.2 million dollars as of Mar. 1.

Scream 7 will remain in theaters for roughly four to eight weeks before premiering on Paramount+ in late April. The film is expected to arrive on additional streaming services at a later date. Scream 7 is a thrilling addition to the long-running series, which continues the franchise's signature stab-horror storyline while delving deeper into the lives of both new characters and returning fan favorites.

## Moroney drops a new album

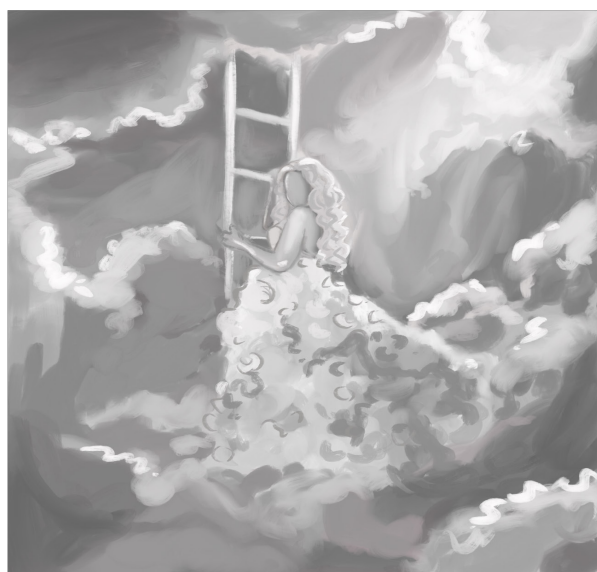
by Britt Melinauskas  
National Editor

Megan Moroney released Cloud 9, her third album, on Feb. 20, a vulnerable yet upbeat pop and country medley. Her popularity began with Pistol Made of Roses, a premiere project, issued as an extended play in 2022 rather than a full-length studio album. With the debut of her albums Lucky (2023) and Am I Ok? (2024), Cloud 9 represents Moroney's shift from green to blue and now to pink. Moroney is moving from the Lucky era of the highs and lows of adulthood, through the heartbreak and honesty of Am I Okay?, and now into the dreamy emotions of Cloud 9. "There's a newfound confidence woven throughout Cloud 9 along with humor, honesty, heartbreak (duh), softness, and love," Moroney pointed out. "It's got everything I love about country music."

Before the entire release of Cloud 9, Moroney released her single 6 Months Later on Jun. 20, 2025, even doing surprise appearances of the song on her Am I Ok? nationwide tour. 6 Months Later set the tone and opening impressions as the album immediately sparked interest nationwide after it instantly rose to number nine on the United States' Hot Country Songs list and remained at number 15 seven weeks after its release. Similarly, Beautiful Things dropped on Oct. 27, 2025, Wish I Didn't on Jan. 16, and Cloud 9 on Feb. 6, marking the three following pre-release songs. Wish I Didn't remains

as the only song on Cloud 9 with a music video and features actor Dylan Efron. Moroney captured both media coverage and strong fan interest before Cloud 9 dropped with additional artists.

Cloud 9 reveals fifteen songs online and two additional songs, Traitor and I Bought a House, as the Target-exclusive bonus tracks on the physical vinyl. After several hints and short clips of the song Traitor on social media, many fans were disappointed with the



F. Banno

album release as these songs were not accessible on popular streaming services such as Apple Music and Spotify. However, supporters expressed their excitement over featured artists Kacey Musgraves in Bells & Whistles and Ed Sheeran in I Only Miss You. In the past, Moroney has published a single collaborating with Kenny Chesney, You Had to Be There, and the song Can't Break Up Now on the band Old Dominion's Memory Lane album. With Moroney's departure from joining other artists, Musgraves and Sheeran's parts in the Cloud 9 album built anticipation for Moroney's creative direction and the way she would incorporate the artists.

Before the album drop, reporters and interviewers asked Moroney about Cloud 9 and she explained, "I write these songs and wear my heart on my sleeve for everyone to hear," Moroney stated. "I hope that my lyrics and my songs make people feel less alone, and I hope that they find their own stories in my story." (Sources: Billboard, GoCountry105, USA Today)

## Singhal breaks down season four of Bridgerton

by Siyona Singhal  
Humor Editor

**Warning: Spoilers ahead for Bridgerton season four**

After an excruciating wait, Netflix finally released all the episodes of season four of the epic period piece Bridgerton. Season four was published in two parts: the first four episodes premiered on Jan. 29, and the next four episodes on Feb. 26. The season has received glowing reviews, and fans are obsessed not only with the season's main couple but also with the characters around them.

Season four brings everything the people want: elaborate costumes, vibrant settings, emotionally developed characters, and, of course, lots of romance. The season focuses on the second-oldest Bridgerton sibling, Benedict, and a maid, Sophie Baek. Their story is a Cinderella-esque romance that blends fairytale love with real-world issues.

Through their sparkling romance, the show highlights the class divide between the two lovers and society's lack of acceptance



A. Pan

for these kinds of couples. Their relationship reflects the vast wealth gap that still resonates 200 years later.

However, beyond Benedict and Sophie, the show also focuses on others in the ton. It explores themes such as grief, friendship, and remarriage. Supporting storylines receive greater emotional depth, allowing viewers to see familiar faces evolve rather than remain static background figures.

One of my personal favorite subplots is the relationship between Queen Charlotte and Lady Danbury; they represent female friendship, and I love the references to the spin-off show Queen Charlotte.

Bridgerton remains a popular show because of its strong foundation. The show continuously brings back beloved characters from previous seasons. For example, in season four, Anthony

Bridgerton and his wife Kate Bridgerton make an appearance; their combined screentime of five minutes had watchers going crazy (I'm watchers). However, beyond cameos, we see familiar characters navigate complicated feelings and grow through their struggles, making us feel more connected to them.

While the subplots are impactful and important parts of the season, sometimes they take away from the main storyline and made Benedict and Sophie seem like side characters. I wish the show had given the two just a little more screentime so the season felt truly theirs. In addition, many of the side storylines feel forced and rushed, while others drag on for too long.

Fans are saying season four redeemed Bridgerton from season three. After overwhelming disappointment in season three, Bridgerton watchers had little hope for season four, but are thankfully wrong. Enthusiasts are ranking the season right below season two, and some believe it is even better. It is safe to say that season four has once again restored the name of Bridgerton and increased the standard for season five.

Overall, Bridgerton season four was binge-worthy. It kept the parts of past seasons that fans love, but incorporated new and memorable stories. I highly recommend season four to everyone and am anxiously waiting for season five.

# The Night Agent's third season thrills audiences

by Julia Valencia  
Opinion Editor

On Feb. 19, the long awaited return of Netflix's *The Night Agent* made its debut, coming out with ten new episodes for its third season.

The show continues to follow government worker Peter Sutherland (Gabriel Basso), and his trials and tribulations as a Night Agent. In season one, Sutherland uncovers a series of lies and traitors in the White House, discovering a plan to assassinate the President, that her very own Vice President formulated. In the show's second season, Sutherland investigates a CIA agent accused of selling state secrets. After his partner is killed and no one in the White House seems concerned about a mole in the Night Agent program, he goes off the grid to try to find the truth himself. His search takes him to New York City, where he becomes entangled with intelligence broker Jacob Monroe

A. Pan



Richard Hagan (Ward Horton), the recently appointed President

(Louis Herthum), who forces Sutherland to act as his inside man. The ordeal ends with Sutherland and his team stopping a chemical weapon attack on New York City.

Season three begins with the White House sending Sutherland to Istanbul to track down Jay Batra (Suraj Sharma), a financial analyst accused of killing his boss. After his arrival, Sutherland realizes that he is not the only one looking for Batra; financial journalist Isabel De Leon (Genesis Rodriguez), along with hitmen attempting to assassinate Batra, are also in Istanbul. Sutherland speaks with De Leon and Batra, figuring out that they are working together to investigate a conspiracy involving a terrorist-funding money laundering ring, following a catastrophic plane crash that killed 157 Americans.

Past characters like Chelsea Arrington (Fola Evans-Akingbola), a secret service agent, Catherine Weaver (Amanda Warren), a head agent in the Night Agent program, and

of the United States, have significant roles in the new episodes. Although fans have enjoyed the new season, one notable character is missing: Rose Larkin (Luciane Buchanan). Larkin was Sutherland's love interest and unofficial partner throughout seasons one and two, but is nowhere to be seen in season three. Though she had a fairly clear exit at the end of season two, saying she was going to move back to California while Sutherland continued to work as a Night Agent, many viewers remained hopeful that she would appear in season three.

The season follows Sutherland and De Leon as they work to uncover the truth behind the terrorist attack, leading them to discover that the secrets and corruption run much deeper than they initially anticipated. Season three also introduces an alternate storyline, following a father-son duo and their role in the scheme.

While the new season has been relatively well-received, with critics saying that the show's pacing issues from past seasons are not a problem in the new season, viewership for season three has dropped 40% compared to season two. But do not let that number fool you; season three is action-packed, and the show remains one of Netflix's staple thrillers. (Sources: Deadline, HuffPost, Rotten Tomatoes)

# Academy Awards arrive

by Atharava Pandey  
Sports Editor

The 2026 Oscars, cinema's biggest annual event, took place on Mar. 15. Held at the Dolby Theatre in Hollywood, the Oscars showcased the year's most accomplished films, along with the directors, producers, writers, and other artists who brought them to life. This year's Oscars featured a variety of genres of entertainment, ranging from *Hamnet* to *Sinners* to *Marty Supreme*. Organized by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, this ceremony remains one of the industry's highest honors, holding the potential to alter a film's legacy.

American television host and comedian Conan O'Brien hosted the Oscars for the second time in a row. Before the award ceremony, O'Brien expressed his excitement about the creative potential of hosting another Oscars: "Early on, you just generate possibilities for the show: 'What might we do?' You have to wait and see which movies are nominated, what's in the zeitgeist, so there'll be a lot of ideas that come in late. Sometimes those are the best ideas."

The voting committee released the nominations for the 2026 Oscars in January. *Sinners*, starring Michael B. Jordan and Hailee Steinfeld, broke the record for most nominations with 16. *One Battle After Another* came in close with 13 nominations. *Marty Supreme*, *Frankenstein*, and *Sentimental Value* all received nine nominations, while *Hamnet* got eight. The academy debuted a new award category this year: casting. The casting directors nominated for this award were Nina Gold for *Hamnet*, Jennifer Venditti for *Marty Supreme*, Cassandra Kulukundis for *One Battle After Another*, Gabriel Domingues for *The Secret Agent*, and Francine Maisler for *Sinners*.

*One Battle After Another* was the biggest winner of the night, taking home six awards, including Best Picture and Best Director. Michael B. Jordan became a first-time Oscar winner, securing Best Actor for his role in *Sinners*. Timothée Chalamet narrowly missed out on the award for his role in *Marty Supreme* but showed good sportsmanship while cheering on Jordan as he went to receive his award.

For the first time in 98 years, Autumn Durald Arkapaw became the first woman to win Best Cinematography at the Oscars, which was a critical moment in the show's history. Furthermore, Jessie Buckley earned Best Actress for her performance in *Hamnet*. Sean Penn won Best Supporting Actor for *One Battle After Another*, and Amy Madigan took home Best Supporting Actress for *Weapons*. Unsurprisingly, KPop Demon Hunters won both Best Animated Feature and Best Original Song as well.

Overall, the 2026 Oscars were at a critical point in Hollywood's history. This past year represented a return to cinema, featuring major hits that heavily influenced America's pop culture. This ceremony also had continued efforts towards international representation. Surprising snubs and first-time winners, along with the drama surrounding its actors, made this year's ceremony one for the history books.

(Sources: ABC News, Variety, Vogue)



# J. Cole drops The Fall-Off

by Arnab Singhal  
Sports Editor

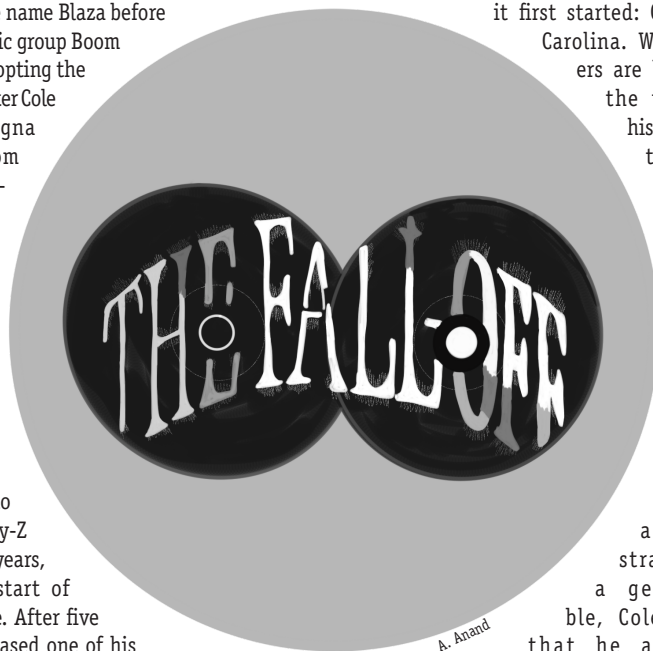
2026 is already shaping up to be a strong year for the arts, with writers and artists releasing a variety of new work. Yet beneath the polished facade that many artists present, one album stands in stark contrast: the fall of the rap legend, J. Cole.

Jermaine Lamar Cole was born on Jan. 28, 1985, on a military base in Frankfurt, Germany. Cole's modest beginnings were rooted in his heritage; his mother was a white postal worker in Frankfurt, and his father was an African American soldier. After his parents' separation, his mother moved him and his older brother, Zach, to Fayetteville, North Carolina. Cole began his music career as a violinist at the Terry Sanford Orchestra, where he gained a newfound appreciation for music. He started his career under the stage name Blaza before joining the music group Boom Sheltuh and adopting the name J. Cole. After Cole graduated magna cum laude from St. John's University in 2007 with a degree in communications, he released his first mixtape, *The Come Up*. The album's immediate success led Cole to signing with Jay-Z in the coming years, marking the start of his rise to fame. After five years, Cole released one of his best works ever, 2014 *Forest Hills Drive*. The album went on to win double platinum, No. 1 on Billboard Hot 200, and Rap Album of the Year at the 2015 BET Hip-Hop awards.

After much anticipation, on Feb. 6, Cole dropped a double album, the last one of his music career. The *Fall-Off* features artists Burna Boy, Future, and Tems. The album initially sold 280,000 units, but faced criticism from the music industry. It diverged from his signature style of hard rap and attempted to use slow-paced, soul-hitting lines to invoke emotion within his audience. Critics from Pitchfork argued that the album's 101-minute runtime was bloated with "basic boom-bap" and "unrefined singing." The publication rated the album a 5.3, the lowest rating ever for his work. The album's failure hit even harder, as Cole had spent nearly a decade teasing it. The audience's response to *The Fall-Off* has sparked fierce debate over whether Cole's dominance in the rap industry has waned.

Cole now prepares for his global arena tour, beginning this summer in the place where it first started: Charlotte, North Carolina. While his listeners are left to question the true nature of his work, it remains to be seen if *The Fall-Off* truly marks a definitive retirement of his music career or if the narrative of an "ending" was a calculated marketing stunt. Whether his album was a strategic exit or a genuine stumble, Cole has ensured that he and he alone controls his journey until the very last line.

(Sources: Adelphi University Archives, Billboard, Biography.com, Pitchfork, Rap-Up, Soul In Stereo, Wikipedia, BET Hip-hop)



# BRUNO MARS RELEASES HIS NEW RECORD, THE ROMANTIC

by Advika Anand and Gowri Sunil  
Graphics and News Editors

Renowned singer-songwriter Bruno Mars recently released his long-awaited solo album, *The Romantic*, after more than a decade of album drought. Mars is known for his blend of pop, funk, and R&B. He weaves mariachi and salsa rhythms through his new album, while maintaining his usual lively, affectionate lyrics.

Born to a Filipino mother and Puerto Rican father, Mars found a passion for music early on. His new album pays homage to his Latin roots, blended with his usual musical style. Starting off strong with *Risk It All*, he artfully kicks off the first 20 seconds with mariachi-style band music using an acoustic guitar. As Mars's voice merges into the other vocals, the tone takes on a more sentimental longing, with light chord strums and occasional trumpets in

the background. *Cha Cha Cha*, another Latin-esque song and one of the *Romantic*'s most popular tracks, opens with a mix of the Cuban *Cha Cha* and salsa rhythms. Through its energetic beat and catchy lyrics, the song entices listeners to sing and dance along from the very first line: "I feel like dancing."

Beyond the Latin style, there is also a balance between more upbeat tunes and moments of reflection.

The album's lead single, *I Just Might*, has made an especially significant impact, with its debut at number one on the Billboard Hot 100 for three consecutive weeks since its release. This track features extremely memorable lyrics about necessary risks in love. Another song, *God Was Showing Off*, has a similar message, with Mars singing about how he would love a

girl properly and shower her with compliments: "Is it your eyes that light my sky?/I bet in the pourin' rain, you still shine." Taking after the album's name, the majority of Mars's songs explore his relationship status through devoted and affectionate lyricism. These upbeat tunes make for a captivating listen to reduce boredom while performing mundane tasks to spice up your mood.

Although most of the tracks are optimistic, others convey a wistful yearning. His eighth track, *Nothing Left*, centers on accepting the idea that a woman with whom he once mutually shared romantic feelings no longer reciprocates them. This song has somber background music, utilizing the piano in the beginning, which gently accelerates into drums, creating a steady beat as Mars sings more passionately. Mars's previous hit, *When I Was Your Man*, shares a similar sense of regret for losing a partner. Another tune, *Dance With Me*, addresses missing a lover and wanting to dance with them one last time, blending multiple components Mars typically relies upon: meaningful lyrics and a guitar as the main instrument.

Despite not producing an album for a while, Mars's return is a clear reminder of the sheer impact he has on the pop industry. *The Romantic* is a celebration of the elements that make Mars the artist he is: his Latin heritage combined with traditional pop. This album is filled with earworms that will dare you not to dance.

(Sources: Billboard, Genius, Rolling Stone)



A. Pan

- Banno represents unlicensed people
- Anand advocates for pigeons

# HUMOR

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## KRAMER EXPLAINS THE PHENOMENA BEHIND SCHOOL AIR

by Nelson Kramer  
Editor-in-Chief

Senior year of high school has felt like the only time when the majority of my classes have prepared me for the real world. From taking social justice, a deeply informative course on the role of race in society, to AP Environmental Science, where I learn another reason why humans are narcissistic shortsighted creatures every week, I feel more educated about the world than ever. However, no amount of courage could have prepared me for the thing I was about to learn.

Everyone knows about school air. It's the weather phenomenon that no meteorologist can sort out. School air refers to the toxic, vile, and frankly backstabbing fumes that ruin all your looks throughout the school day. If you know school air, you know the feeling of waking up and leaving the house primp and primed, looking like a baddie, ready for the day, and coming home to your mom not recognizing the beast that walks through the front door. I had no idea that this mysterious phenomenon, which I thought was used only by the aesthetically challenged as an excuse, is real.

Even though I always feel like an intellectual when I leave the classroom, I can't help but notice I never look the part. How can I fill my brain with all this knowledge, stuff that might help me change the world, and yet every time I look into that rusty school bath-

room mirror after first period, I immediately jump back? My jaw always hits the floor when I see the state of my hair, my greasy undereye bags, and the zits that are literally playing peek-a-boo on my face.

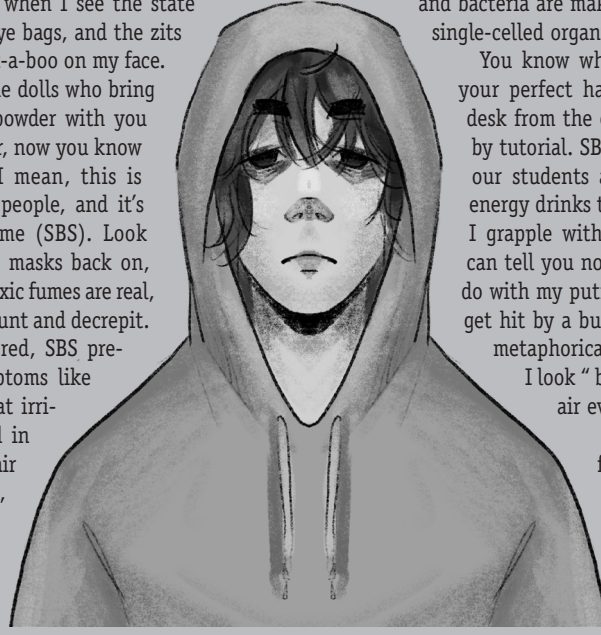
For all of you divas and the dolls who bring copious amounts of setting powder with you to keep your exterior together, now you know whom to point fingers at. I mean, this is straight from the textbook, people, and it's called Sick Building Syndrome (SBS). Look it up. Better put your KN-95 masks back on, because the aforementioned toxic fumes are real, and they're making us look gaunt and decrepit.

When it was first discovered, SBS presented as acute health symptoms like fatigue, headaches, and throat irritation in people who worked in office buildings. Overuse of air conditioning, poor ventilation, and exposure to other toxic chemicals and pollutants such as volatile organic compounds (VOCs), mold,

and bacteria can cause these problems. Did you hear that? Mold and bacteria are making us ugly! How are we going to let a single-celled organism take control of our lives like this?

You know what will mess up your good mood and your perfect hair day? Slamming your head on your desk from the excruciating headache you always have by tutorial. SBS deniers will point to the lack of sleep our students are getting or the reliance on sugary energy drinks to start each day. But tell me, why don't I grapple with these symptoms on the weekends? I can tell you now that my lack of sleep has nothing to do with my putrid looks. Even though I may feel like I get hit by a bus each morning, I am positive that the metaphorical vehicle always misses my face because I look "boots the house down" before the school air even touches me.

For now, I'm officially signing off from this nightmare and enrolling in homeschool until our administration can sort this issue. You can see me on Instagram, where I'm in the comfort of my home, looking and feeling better than ever!



## CHANG AND ZAMANSKY COMPARE MOMS

by Tanya Chang and Lila Zamansky  
Sports and Media Production Editors

While Lila and Tanya both navigate a complex world together, they share two very different experiences: an almond mom household and an ingredient household. Almond moms will constantly enforce a borderline psychotic diet, filled with half an almond and some chopped cucumbers disguised as a delicious dessert. On the other hand, in an ingredient household, you will be faced with cabinets so bare that even the rats can't find anything. You may think from the previous article that their friendship thrives on rage-bating; however, the core foundation lies in their shared trauma of, let's just say, an interesting cuisine.

Picture this. You come home to your almond mom from the most diabolical day at school, and all you want is a filling snack. You open your pantry and examine your options: homemade protein granola, cheese sticks, carrots, and chia seed bars. Honestly, you just accept defeat and take the slightly salted dried edamame beans.

Wait! Mom says there is a sweet treat for you in the fridge. You practically skip with joy, just to find a five-day-old yogurt that has - this one might knock your socks off - four grams of sugar.

Now, there is one distinct characteristic that sets the ingredient household apart from others. To explain, let's describe a day in the life of a victim of an ingredient mom. You get home from practice, you're as hungry as pre-2022 Nikocado Avacado, and

you ask your mom if you can have a snack. "Make something, hun! I just bought tofu flour. It will be delicious!" she excitedly replies. You ignore her and walk towards the pantry, hoping something will have magically appeared. It's your lucky day, the glorious and legendary chocolate chips are lying before your very eyes. For normal kids, this may seem like an overreaction, but for an ingredient household, this is like Christmas morning.

These moms do have a few similarities. For one, when you ask to buy something at the grocery store or go out to dinner, they always have the same dull response that sends children into instant rage: "We have food at home." Almond and ingredient moms are always making a new dish, which may or may not be edible. Whether they find it on Instagram reels, NY Times top ten healthiest meals, or an Amish blog, the experimentations (we mean recipes) are either the most delightful meals your taste buds have ever experienced or taste like minerals directly extracted from the earth.

This may seem like the hardest thing one will experience, or at least it feels that way to Lila and Tanya, but don't worry, you get used to your house being a secondary source to a farm.

And don't get us wrong; almond moms and ingredient households have their place in society, but it's nowhere near us.



## PAN TRIES TO REMEMBER NAMES

by Annabelle Pan  
Graphics Editor

As an experienced forgetter, I am all too familiar with asking the question, "Sorry, what's your name again?" Remembering names is like learning new vocabulary. It just doesn't stick. After years of struggling with this self-diagnosed condition, I've learned that the best way to deal with chronic memory loss is denial. Deny both the problem and the need for improvement.

My first coping mechanism is victim-blaming. It's not my fault if I don't know your name. It's your fault for not memorably introducing yourself. You should have entered the room at the front of a parade with your own theme song. Take Prince Ali, for example. I only know one line from the entire Aladdin movie, and it's his unforgettable name. If writing a song and a grand entrance is too hard, a name tag would suffice. That way, you wouldn't have to reintroduce yourself every ten minutes. Anyways, who needs a name when I can just point and say "you there" to single people out. Instead of stuffing hundreds of names into my last brain cell, I can rebrand every person I meet as "you." It's inclusive, it's unoffensive, and best of all, it's efficient.

Where denial falls short, I turn to strategy and resourcefulness. Everything around me is a tool to be used for my benefit and mine

alone. Say, for example, you tried to introduce two people before realizing you don't know their names. First of all, shame on you for being a bad acquaintance, but it's an easy fix. Right before you attempt to say a name, pretend you received an important notification. "Oh my goodness, I'm so sorry. I need to take this call right now. You two talk and get to know each other first. I'll be right back." Just like that, you've evaded the conversation. The more flustered you sound, the better. One time, I was chatting with a classmate her name was...it started with...anyways - and I had no idea who she was, so I patiently waited for someone else to call her name before echoing it with the confidence of a scammer. I repeated it immediately to make sure I used it before it slipped from my memory again. Eye contact. Slight smile, but not too cocky. A look that says, "I knew that all along."

The final and most useful technique is pretending that I know who everyone else is talking about. When the name mentioned does not belong to anyone involved in the conversation, my go-to response is, "Oh, is that the person who [insert random fact]?" If my random guess was incorrect, someone else will correct me and tell me exactly who the person is. All I need to do is store that information in the black hole of my brain and respond, "Ohhhhh, right. Yeah, yeah, I remember now." An even safer strategy is to simply nod. I nod at lunch. I nod at parties. I accidentally nodded during a story about someone's breakup. If I get your name down after the first meeting, it's over. Check the sky for meteors. The world is ending.



## BANNO JUSTIFIES HER LACK OF A LICENSE

by Fuyu Banno  
Graphics Editor

Let me introduce myself. Hi, I am Fuyu Banno. I am now seventeen years old, and I suffer from a case of "I should have my license, but I don't even have my permit." It's a curable disease that affects hundreds, if not thousands, of high school juniors around the country. However, just because I can fix it doesn't mean I will. Today, I'll be answering the most common questions people have about unlicensed teenagers who should have their license as their (unofficial) representative.

Q: Why do you not have your license?

A: Despite what people may believe, I, in fact, am not hiding a license. I simply do not have time. It's because I'm such an academic weapon, and my schedule is so full I don't even have the space to get my permit. Why would I learn how to drive when I should be learning how to save the planet? It may also be because, for some reason, Netflix seems to eat away my minutes and hours, and my phone never seems to bore me.

Q: Have you ever even attempted to get your permit?

A: I have never opened the DMV website. But I have, for the record, carefully read through a DMV pamphlet, which I would say counts.

Q: Do you think you would be a good driver?

A: Of course. I have tons of experience with Mario Kart 8, which is basically just the same thing as irl driving. I especially excel at driving on Rainbow Road in Mario Kart, and I'm pretty sure drifting is just as easy in real life. Perhaps I am too good for the regular roads that the common people drive on. Mario and his friends wish they were me.

Q: Is there any upside to being unlicensed as a junior?

A: Yes, of course. Not being able to drive means that I do not have to pay for gas money, worry about car insurance, or have to park my car. I'm never concerned about getting to school at the crack of dawn just to get a free spot, and I never have to look like an idiot sprinting after school to my car to avoid traffic. I can only look at my friends who can drive with sympathy and amazement at how they carry this big weight, especially with all the junior year stress on top of everything.

Q: When are you getting your license?

A: Well, I need to get my permit. So I must study for that first and need to book my permit test. And then I have to take lessons and wait six months before I can take my driving test. And then I need to pass that, and then I can get my license! Oh! I also need to get a car, which means I need insurance. And don't get me started on how long everything takes with my procrastination. The point I am trying to get across is that I promise I will get my license as soon as possible. Trust me.

That was it for the Q and A session. I hope that the world gets a better understanding and even gains some sympathy for those who don't have a license. We people with no license should never be ashamed, especially because we will definitely be on the road soon... definitely. In the near future, I promise.



graphics courtesy A. Pan

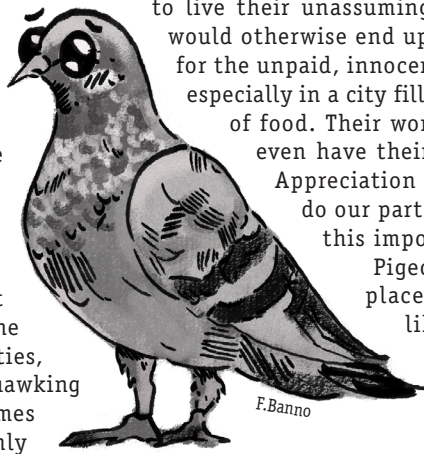
# Anand advocates for justice for pigeons

by Advika Anand

Graphics Editor

Sky rats, chicken birds, flying ashtrays, otherwise known by most as pigeons, are the world's most failed domesticated species. Yes, these small birds are somehow always in your path, and yes, they do tend to expel their waste atop your head, but they are vital elements to our community, and dare I say that we as a society would not be the same without the incorporation of pigeons. If you are confused, do not fret, I will explain.

For anyone who does not go outside or touch grass, pigeons are found worldwide but primarily live in urban areas and are most commonly associated with New York City. The Big Apple. A bustling metropolis of opportunities, diversity, and...pigeons. Yep, the rat-birds squawking on sidewalks, dropping feces on tourists in Times Square, and constantly getting underfoot only slightly diminish the magic of the city. Visitors and locals alike refer to pigeons as a NYC staple and



a perennial pain in the butt. However, these poor pigeons receive undeserved hate. They should not shoulder the burden of all rodents, solely because rich Upper Eastsiders get scat on their Louboutin pumps. They are just trying to live their unassuming lives, feeding on scraps that would otherwise end up wasted. We should be grateful for the unpaid, innocent cleaners of our public spaces, especially in a city filled with an interminable amount of food. Their work is so important that pigeons even have their own holiday: National Pigeon Appreciation Day is June 13. We should all do our part and promote the celebration of this important species.

Pigeons are obviously found in more places than NYC, yet still treated like the vermin of the sky. In fact, Pigeon Point Lighthouse in San Mateo is named after a clipper ship named Carrier Pigeon Boat that wrecked on the shore. Although this may not be an actual pigeon, I like to

think they drew inspiration from the picture of pigeons. On a more serious note, if you are passionate and interested in pigeon watching, Parque de las Palomas in Puerto Rico is an ideal location to purchase birdseed and feed thousands of pigeons in a designated area.

A slightly more niche reason to love pigeons: Mister Pigeon in Miraculous Ladybug. If you do not know about this character or Miraculous Ladybug, first of all: what are you doing with your life? Alas, I will explain. Miraculous Ladybug is a children's (though I would argue that it's a show for all ages) television show set in Paris that centers around superheroes fighting a major super villain: Hawk Moth. Hawk Moth feeds off of people's extreme emotions and "akumatizes" them—essentially turning them into one of his sidekicks. One in particular stands out: Mister Pigeon, who, in his akumatized form, gains the ability to communicate with birds and plans to turn Paris into a nature reserve for his bird friends. We should all be more like Mr. Pigeon and give pigeons the love they so deserve. Maybe don't go so far as to dedicate an entire city to them, but this goes to show the level of pigeon fans out there in the world, real or not.

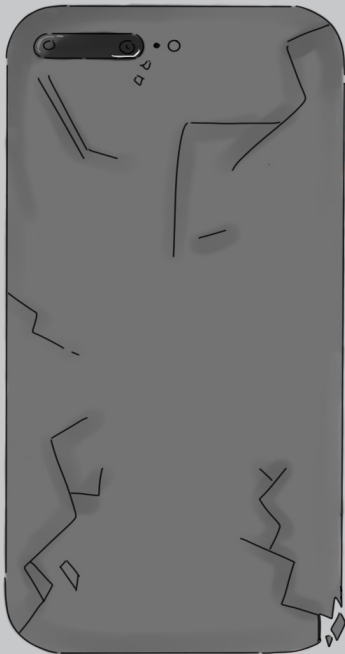
## Habib explains his struggles with the iPhone 7

by Ivan Habib

Website Manager

On Sept. 9, Apple revealed the iPhone 17 — a device so advanced and "intelligent" it practically does your taxes for you. It boasts an impressive 40x camera zoom, because you never know when you will need to whip out a full-fledged long-distance microscope to make out the microscopic tax deductions Apple's Personal Intelligence just found for you. However, my heart belongs to my trusty iPhone 7 Plus. With 12 megapixels and an eight-hour battery life, (provided you do not turn the screen on) it is all I truly need in life.

My first phone was my mom's old iPhone 6. Despite being the best-selling iPhone of all time, the prohibitive latency and bottleneck at iOS 12 rendered me unable to do much of anything on the ten-year-old phone. The next logical upgrade would probably be the somewhat recent iPhone 15, or perhaps a less expensive refurbished iPhone 11. However, why would I spend, at minimum, an extra \$400, when my grandma had several iPhone 7's lying around, an ancient relic of the many internet and phone carriers giving new phones for free. As such, my next phone was the iPhone 7 Plus. Society is slowly forgetting the amazingness of the iPhone 7, which is coming up on its tenth anniversary. Depreciated in 2022, I can proudly claim my phone as officially, Apple deemed "vintage." With my vintage status, I am stuck at iOS 15, meaning that the quintessential Canvas, Google Docs, Quizlet, and of course, ChatGPT apps are entirely non-functional on my phone. Even the web versions of these tools



F. Banno

come with obscure zooming, inaccessible buttons, and the classic freeze-and-restart. The only silver lining? While my phone might render productivity infeasible, it is recent enough to support Clash Royale — because who needs a GPA when you can destroy your opponents' dreams with a level 15 Mega Knight (relax, I do not play Mega Knight. I have some standards).

In all honesty, the iPhone 7 Plus is a tank. Despite the significant operating system's

lack of support, its structural integrity remains impressive. Whereas my friends will drop their phones once and have them completely shatter, I have dropped my phone over three times in the past month alone. I like to think of the screen protector scratches as battle scars. My iPhone 7 is a survivor. The home button still tricks me every time, an insane feat of engineering, getting me to press a button that does not even exist. My battery life, despite crossing the dreaded 80% cliff, still lasts me a full

day with ease. My 12 megapixels, despite taking every single picture with a "cinematic blur" that is definitely not the result of my repeatedly scratching the lens, gives each memory a charming appeal. Each moment I wait in agony for an app to load is a moment of mindfulness. And best of all, I never paid 1,500 dollars for a slight improvement in the newest iPhone.

## HATHAWAY RELIVES SKI SCHOOL

by Quinn Hathaway

Media Production Editor

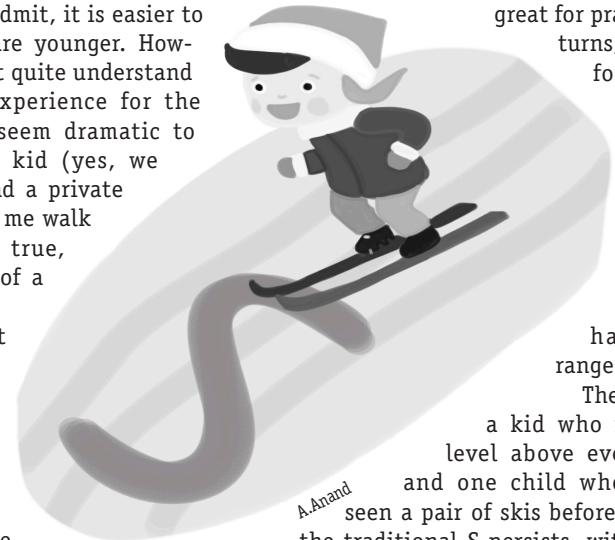
Picture this: a child who can barely walk, strapped into tiny planks of wood, bundled up in seemingly endless layers, and most likely crying. Then, all you have to do is multiply by six, and there you go: the average ski school lesson.

People love skiing; they travel the world in search of the best snow, terrain, and apres. And I will admit, it is easier to learn when you are younger. However, what I do not quite understand is the positive experience for the child. This may seem dramatic to a non-ski-school kid (yes, we can tell if you had a private instructor), so let me walk you through the true, unedited version of a day in ski school.

No matter what age you start, the day always begins at the lodge. The group assembles slowly, in various states of readiness. Some kids arrive completely ready, sans skis, while others arrive in pajamas. The starting time of the lesson rolls around and...keeps rolling, because no ski school lesson has ever started on time. There are always one to three kids wailing, a chorus of "My boots are too tight," "Why can't I have poles," and "I'm cold." The parents hover anxiously, waiting to abandon their child and go carve the double black diamonds on the backside.

After what seems like hours, the group finally hits the slopes. And "hits" is literal. From the time the kids touch the snow to the second the group goes in for lunch, there's at least one child on the ground. The whole time. For the sake of this article,

I picked a lesson for green circle-level beginners, so in addition to skiing, there is the challenge of the chairlift. Congratulations to the people who wind up on the lift, because there is a 90% chance the group will wipe out getting on, getting off, or both. Next, the descent: the classic S-shaped line forms behind the instructor, with immediate complaints about who gets to be first. The S-shape is great for practicing wide turns, but horrible



A. Anand

for the group of kids who, despite their parents all selecting "beginner" on the lesson form, have a wide range of abilities. There is always a kid who is an entire level above everyone else, and one child who has never seen a pair of skis before. Regardless, the traditional S persists, with the group making it one five-foot interval before one of the tiny tots wipes out. Lunch time is also a disaster, as the provided food is never satisfactory. Someone doesn't like mac'n'cheese, someone needs more, someone dropped theirs on the ground. Lunch may be a break from the slopes, but not a break from the frustration.

After lunch is over, it is time to head back out. The next three hours are a repeat of the first three. By the end of the day, everyone is done with skiing, possibly forever, and the instructor definitely mutters something, audibly, about "rugrats." Regardless, the parents are happy, despite their cold, miserable child. Ready for tomorrow's lesson?

## Singhal discusses the downfall of fan fiction

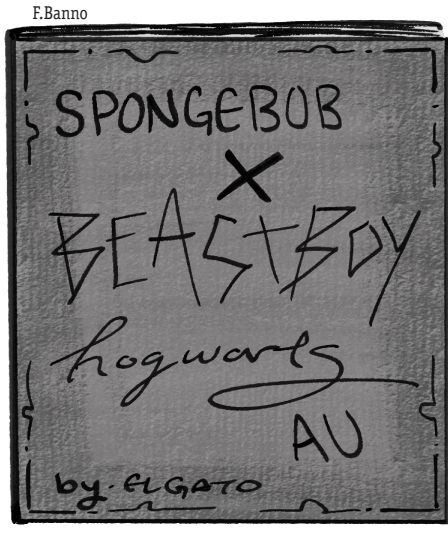
by Siyona Singhal

Humor Editor

Every BookTok girl, Barnes and Noble frequenter, and self-proclaimed bookworm partially owes their love of reading to their middle school fanfiction-devouring self who stayed up way too late refreshing for the next chapter. Maybe they'll never admit it, but I will: fanfiction is a cornerstone of society. The chokehold that Twilight AUs had on teenage girls needs to be studied, but what deserves even more investigation is the decline of these insanely popular and slightly unhinged stories that shaped a generation of readers. So buckle up, because I'm about to walk you through the rise and fall of fanfiction.

Fanfiction can be traced all the way back to the 1930s, but truly it peaked in the 2010s. I don't know what was in the air from 2013-2016, but whatever it was, it had fanfiction authors working overtime. I mean, these people were upload-

ing chapters from their deathbeds, writing author's notes like, "Sorry, this chapter is two hours late, I got hit by a bus and had to get surgery. And then my mom literally went missing, so I had to find her; turns out she got kidnapped, so that was crazy. Anyways, here's chapter 103 of 'SpongeBob x Beast Boy Hogwarts AU.'" It wasn't just the authors; readers were unhinged back then, too. Comment sections were either full of trauma dumping, clowning, or violent anger at an author's failure to upload. Websites like Archive of Our Own, Wattpad, and FanFiction.com became sacred corners of the internet full of chaos and historic pieces of literature. People were reading one million words in one night, but couldn't read a three-page textbook assignment (I'm people). Pinterest boards full of the ugliest outfits ever put together skyrocketed, and suddenly messy buns were popping up everywhere.



F. Banno

And the tropes, don't even get me started. I'm convinced people were writing scenarios directly derived from their dreams. No ship was too crazy, no setting too far: mafias, werewolves, undercover princes. You name it, someone wrote it. Every girl was smitten with Damon Salvatore and fantasized about being sold to One Direction.

But then one day, something shifted. Suddenly, morally grey characters were popping up in bookstores. Slow burn, enemies-to-lovers, and "oh no, there's only one bed" tropes became popular. Everything went mainstream. And maybe that's the real "decline." Not that fanfiction got worse, but that it stopped feeling like a community. It used to feel like you were part of something unhinged and borderline illegal. Everyone shared one brain cell and supported each other's morally questionable choices. Now, the reading community is full of judgment and people complaining about books being overhyped. I mean, take Haunting Adeline for example. Today, people label it as psychotic, deranged, and an overall dumpster fire; it would have done numbers on prime Wattpad.

Still, no matter how polished BookTok gets or how aesthetic the Barnes & Noble hauls become, there will always be a middle schooler somewhere, tabs open, heart racing, whispering, "Just one more chapter." And honestly? That's the foundation of modern literature.

- Eoff participates in school theater
- Rich commits to Northeastern

# PEOPLE

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## Eoff pursues theater, acting, and guitar

by **Siyona Singhal**  
Humor Editor

Through guitar and theater, junior **SJ Eoff** is turning his passions into priorities, dedicating his time to the things he truly loves.

Eoff is taking a diverse course load, including Guitar 1, one of his favorite classes. Despite his initial hesitation about taking Guitar 1 after playing guitar for a few years, his friends persuaded him when they said they would be in the class as well. Eoff's favorite part about the class is "just playing guitar, and I really love the teacher [**Thad Smith**]." Eoff started learning guitar the summer before freshman year: "I was really into, like, Morgan Wallen. I asked for an acoustic guitar for my fourteenth birthday because I wanted



to play the songs that I liked that he made." However, within six months, Eoff began to lean towards rock, punk, and metal music, which is the majority of what he plays now. One of his favorite bands to play is Bullet For My Valentine because "they have a lot of technical riffs which push me to try harder to play them. It makes me better because I play harder stuff."

In addition to his love of guitar, Eoff participates in theater with his friends. He enjoys participating in school plays and musicals, but is also part of a company outside of school called Stage Presence. Eoff started there as he was entering high school, drawn to it because "I had a friend who was already in theater, and I had seen a couple of their musicals. I stopped, and thought, 'Wow, it would be very cool to be on stage.'" Eoff has been in many productions,

his favorite being Little Shop of Horrors, where he played Seymour Krelborn. Eoff leans towards musicals as opposed to straight plays but commented, "I love singing, I love acting, and I do it with friends. It's always fun, no matter what." Currently, Eoff is looking forward to the school spring musical Hadestown, in which he is part of the ensemble and the understudy for Hades. Eoff explained that his favorite part about theater is "the process. I just like having fun with friends throughout the rehearsal process, and the performing part is also really fun. I enjoy being on stage."



Eoff's parting advice is simple: "Do things that you enjoy, and you'll find more about yourself. High school is all about finding out who you are. Be yourself!" By balancing academics with his artistic pursuits, Eoff shows that high school isn't just about building a résumé; it's about discovering what makes you feel most alive and chasing it wholeheartedly.

## Tremblay excels in lacrosse, field hockey, and academics

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

Athlete and freshman **Eleanora Tremblay** is making the most of her first year at Los Gatos High School, taking on advanced classes, a hectic sports schedule, and various leadership roles. Tremblay's determined spirit and work ethic are prominent in every endeavor.

Tremblay is an active participant in two school sports: field hockey and lacrosse. As a midfielder on both teams, Tremblay proves herself to be a viable asset, providing a reliable link between offensive and defensive players. Kicking off her first lacrosse season on the LGHS team, she secured a starting spot on varsity. Because it is rare for a freshman to play on varsity in such a competitive environment, this is a particularly impressive achievement. This fall marked Tremblay's first field hockey season, sparking a new chapter in her athletic career. Her pursuit of new passions reflects her bold athletic spirit, as she has learned to love both sports and the lessons she takes away from them.



Beyond sports at the high school, Tremblay has been playing lacrosse since first grade and participating at the club team level since she was ten. This year, she is competing for the Alliance National team. As Alliance National is based in Los Angeles, Tremblay travels to practice in LA and San Diego twice a month. Additionally, she will be traveling year-round to tournaments across the country, demonstrating both her love and commitment to lacrosse.

Away from the field, Tremblay immerses herself in her academics, learning to manage her time between schoolwork and athletics while maintaining a strong work ethic. Her schedule includes Biology, French, Health and Fitness, Precalculus Honors, English, and Leadership. Although excelling in math, she remarked, "My favorite class is French because I like the creative aspects it poses."

Aside from her academic classes, Tremblay is an active member of the LGHS Leadership team. She is currently part of the Community Commission, which recently organized visits to Fisher and C.T. English Middle Schools. There, they met with students and shared anecdotes about different aspects of high school and the

Leadership class. Tremblay has also been a part of the Dance Commission and Student Store, where she has learned to organize and plan school events, as well as work with product production and profits.

Balancing two sports seasons along with her packed school schedule has helped Tremblay improve her time management skills significantly. She explained that her various commitments have taught her to "be resourceful and aware of time, while being dedicated to something and working really hard to persevere through challenges." Tremblay excels throughout her school environments and athletic pursuits, while maintaining a positive mindset that guides her toward success.



## Goulden enjoys his senior year

by **Arnav Singhal**  
Sports Editor

Senior and student-athlete **Tanner Goulden** is making the most of his final year of high school. While most of his peers are still asleep, Goulden is already looking down at the Golden Gate Bridge from the summit of St. Joseph's Hill. As a dedicated mountain biker, his day often begins at 6:00 AM, when he tackles the mountain that he first encountered on the Freshman Fun Run. Here, he has the privilege of watching the sun rise over the entire Bay Area. It's that intense drive that defines his final year at Los Gatos, a year packed with sports, intense courses, and nostalgia.



running ever since. This year, Goulden hopes to run faster than ever and make the most of his final season on the team.

Outside of school, Goulden is involved in the Community Center Campaign, a movement sponsored by the Los Gatos Thrives

Foundation to create an equitable third space for the town's residents. He inherited this initiative two years ago and currently serves as the High School Focus Group Lead. Goulden's commitment to the initiative has resulted in data gathered from over 800 students about what they would like to see in the center, as well as features in local news outlets. When asked about his work, Goulden elaborated, "I'm working on a lot of very intimate and tight-knit projects. The idea of getting a community center built in Los Gatos means a lot to me."

Looking back on his years in high school, Goulden has many challenges along the way. This year alone, he has had to balance the intensity of college applications and school. To any new students beginning their high school careers, Goulden advised, "Don't worry about the resume. Do things that you care about, and then the rest will come naturally. As long as you really invest yourself in a lot of things, you'll find that passion, and you won't have to worry about what comes next."

If you see Goulden on campus, don't be shy to ask him about his work with the center; he is sure to strike up a conversation.

## SOPHOMORE LEU BRANCHES OUT

by **Nelson Kramer**  
Editor-in-Chief

Sophomore music talent **Lana Leu** is warming up for a busy and successful high school career. From taking seven classes to captaining the JV softball team, Leu proves to be a tenacious presence across all facets of LGHS.

At LGHS, Leu has strong ties to the music department. Currently in the Crescent Ensemble as the first chair French horn, she expressed that she knows the ropes when it comes to picking up a new instrument. Leu started her musical journey on piano, moved to trumpet, then to percussion, and finally settled on the French horn. In addition to Crescent Ensemble, Leu has participated in marching band for both freshman and sophomore year. Discussing the process of learning routines, Leu remarked, "Partway through the season, somehow it just clicks." Aside from her talent for instruments, Leu noted that being in band makes her feel grounded, recalling the strong community ties that come with that class.

Outside of the band, Leu also loves her Manufacturing Technology class. Along with following assignments and learning how to make new things, she also embraces the freedom to craft objects

from her imagination. Looking over the previous semester, she commented, "I've been able to make things for my friends and family. So I made my brother a little plane for Christmas."

After school, Leu brings a lot of energy to the Girls JV Softball team. Having the opportunity to level up to the varsity squad, she decided to stick back and stay on the JV team to take on the leadership role of captain. This new position has brought on a lot of learning experiences. Leu explained, "Out of the first-year students, some of them are pretty new to the sport, so it's helping me figure out how I can help them. I have to figure out ways to make them feel welcome and get the whole team together."

As for college plans and the future, Leu is open to exploring what interests her in the coming years. From what Leu knows, she sees herself going into a STEM field. She has decided to explore more science and math opportunities on campus, noting her affinity with Chemistry and Biology as the greatest compelling forces at the moment.

Through her exploration of music, diligent work in the classroom, and great team effort and leadership on the softball field, Leu has proven herself a vital part of our campus's lively and earnest culture. Wherever the next couple of years take her, she is sure to find success!



# Senior Rich aims for a career in medicine

by Megan Saul  
Editor-in-Chief

LGHS Wildcat turned Northeastern Husky **Sara Rich** is making her last semester of senior year nothing short of extraordinary.

Although it is only her first year in Leadership, she has transformed the class in a short amount of time. She decided to join after watching the class make their mark on LGHS throughout her first three years here. Unlike most classes that are assignment and rubric-focused, she explained that leadership “looked like they were actually doing important projects around school.” As one of the senior class spirit representatives, she plans and decorates the spirit hallway and hosts weekly meetings at her home. Thanks to leadership’s collaborative environment, Rich has also met many new people and made friends in different grades. She shared, “I can’t give away the theme of the spirit week for spring yet, but I would say this is probably my favorite one so far, just because it’s super fun. And like, I’m definitely having fun planning it and making all the decorations with everyone. I can already tell that it will be my favorite and the best.” Stay tuned for the next spirit week, starting on Mar. 30!



photos courtesy Sara Rich

Despite a lack of interest in STEM topics in middle school, Rich’s freshman year Biology class sparked her fascination with science. Rich commented, “I liked it a lot, and I thought that the labs were interesting. It helped me realize what I’m good at and what I’m not good at.” During her junior year, Rich took AP Biology, and she is currently enrolled in AP Chemistry. With many possible STEM-related careers, Rich is interested in pursuing medicine. She explained, “I knew that I didn’t want to do something in an office or have a job where I’m not talking to people.”



photos courtesy Sara Rich

Just a few months ago, Rich was unsure about which college she wanted to attend. After submitting her early applications, she started considering where she could picture herself for the next four years. After a lot of research and consideration of location, size, and available opportunities, she set her eyes upon Northeastern. Rich noted, “I toured some other schools like Oregon that are in a small college town. I realized that I was scared of being in this type of college town because I felt like I would feel trapped. But when I went to Boston, I could definitely see myself living there.” An additional aspect about Northeastern that intrigued Rich was its Undergraduate Cooperative Education Program, a program that offers paid work experience related to a student’s major. She plans to participate in the program, which will give her practice working at a major company for a semester, possibly in another big city like New York. Surrounding yourself with Rich’s infectious laugh is sure to enrich your day. This Boston-bound future doctor is a perfect example of how hard work pays off and how to enjoy your last few months of high school.

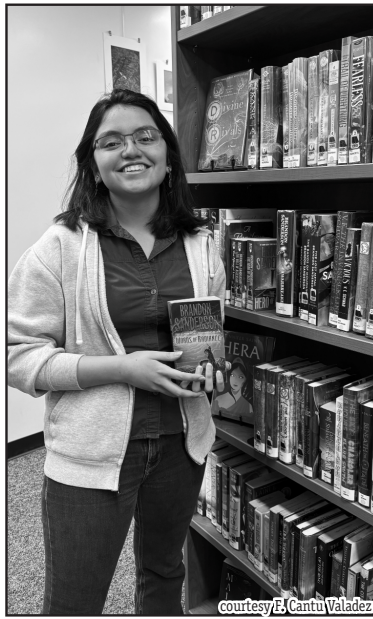
# Cantu Valadez thrives in her studies

by Annabelle Pan and Tanvi Ambekar  
Graphics and Opinion Editors

With classes ranging from AP Biology to French 4 Honors, junior **Fernanda Cantu Valadez** pursues her dreams in the medical field while continuing to explore her interests in reading and language.

Working towards a pre-medical track, Cantu Valadez aspires to help others as she herself has been helped. She struggles with chronic pain and, given her experience seeing doctors and specialists, she knows that “even just a diagnosis is something that patients really search for,” because it provides an explanation for their suffering. The innovation of medicine also appeals to Cantu Valadez since she understands that conditions without cures can make patients feel hopeless. She believes that part of the power of medicine lies in doctors who are committed to discovering new treatments. She noted, “The doctors that I have really looked up to are the ones that sit down and explain to you what they think might be going on.”

Because of this, Cantu Valadez hopes to incorporate research into her medical career as well. She has looked into both cardiology and immunology and explored many branches of science, including biology, chemistry, and even quantum mechanics. She follows stem cell research projects that aim to grow human organs in other organisms. These projects have “had some promising



courtesy F. Cantu Valadez

results in the early stages,” and she appreciates how each finding builds on other discoveries to drive science toward further developments.

Cantu Valadez is also a passionate linguist. As a native Spanish speaker, she aced the AP Spanish Language and Culture exam in her sophomore year and is now enrolled in French class.

She likes the fun nature of the French program with crêpe parties and potlucks, and she observed, “We still learn a lot. Sometimes I’m surprised, like, ‘Oh my gosh. I understand stuff. Who would’ve thunk?’” While she enjoys learning French, her Spanish fluency leads her to appreciate the language more. One of her favorite games to play when meeting other Spanish-speakers is to guess their nationality; for example, people from Spain speak with a telltale lisp. Eventually, she wants to identify French accents as well, but she still finds the grammar difficult.

Even with her heavy course load, Cantu Valadez always makes time to read, a hobby she acquired upon discovering the Harry Potter series in second grade. She often reads thousand-page books from Brandon Sanderson, her favorite author, commenting, “I like to read because I want to read. When you read a book, you often want to share that experience with somebody, and it’s a surefire way to make friends.” Although they initially appear unrelated, her interests in literature, language, and STEM ultimately point to her curiosity and constant pursuit of knowledge.

# Nguyen excels in many hobbies

by Hayley Strahs and Siyona Singhal  
Editor-in-Chief and Humor Editor

Despite a busy schedule, freshman **Felix Nguyen** makes sure to find time to explore new hobbies and interests.

Of Nguyen’s diverse course load, his favorite class is Clothing and Fashion Design. He explained that he was drawn to the class because “in middle school, I really wanted to be a fashion designer.” However, after taking the class, Nguyen has serious doubts about his ability to make that dream a reality.

Outside of school, the freshman channels his creativity through journalism. He is part of a student-led opinion newsletter called Outspoken, which discusses events going on throughout the world. Nguyen found the newsletter recently and has loved “the creative liberty. We can write about pretty much anything, so it has been really fun.” One of Nguyen’s favorite articles detailed his criticism of the increasing fetishization and accessorization of the LGBTQ community, especially following the fame of shows like Heated Rivalry. His most recent feature comments on memetic warfare: “It’s coping through humor, and it undermines the severity of violence.”

Nguyen is also participating in the school musical, Hadestown. It is his first time participating in theater, but he is finding the experience to be immensely enjoyable. Despite not having a background in singing or dancing, Nguyen has found that the process of learning has been relatively



S. Singhal

smooth: “There are definitely some dances that I can improve on, but other than that, it’s been pretty chill.” In the musical, Nguyen will be a part of the ensemble, intending to portray a “shady, drug-dealing character.”

Recently, Nguyen has returned to two of his old hobbies: swimming and taekwondo. After taking a few years off, Nguyen is ecstatic about resuming his participation in the pool. He is currently swimming for the YMCA Youth Club Team. Although Nguyen also took a break from taekwondo and must start over from scratch, he is enjoying his rekindled hobby and hopes to see progress.

He added, “You can get back to me when I’m a black belt.” In addition to being an athlete, Nguyen has been a baker for as long as he can remember. Among everything he’s baked, a chocolate chip cookie recipe he discovered on TikTok a few years ago remains his all-time favorite creation. Nguyen’s baked goods range from cookies to decadent cinnamon rolls. Nguyen has always baked for fun, but he envisions that his hobby could one day evolve into a small business. For now, though, he is content providing his friends and family with copious amounts of sweet treats.

Through all of his escapades, Nguyen brings with him an illuminating mantra: “Audacity will take you much further than logic ever will.” From diving into musical theater, to resuming his old athletic passions, this freshman certainly leads an audacious and diverse life. No matter what high school throws at him, Nguyen is ready to take on the world.

# SOPHOMORE LE STEERS HIS TEAMMATES TO SUCCESS

by Tanya Chang  
Sports Editor

Captain of the undefeated JV basketball team **Mason Le** is thriving in his sophomore year of high school, his strong mindset and leadership skills driving him to improve both on and off the court.

Le participates in a well-rounded schedule including Algebra 2 Accelerated, AP European History, English 10 Honors, Spanish 3, Chemistry, and Ceramics. While he mentioned English 10 Honors as challenging, he acknowledged his struggles as an opportunity to grow academically. Le added that Ceramics offers a space where he can express his creative freedom, a low stress outlet during school hours. In the future, he looks to pursue a career path in engineering; to support his work ethic on a minor scale, he stays organized when it comes to practices, assignments, and volunteering.

This year, Le guided the JV Basketball team to an undefeated season, thanks to the team’s talent and collaboration. He credits their success to the close-knit community their team has built, along with their growing trust, as he explained: “We played club basketball together, so we had chemistry, and we played together freshman year.” This shared experience translated to each

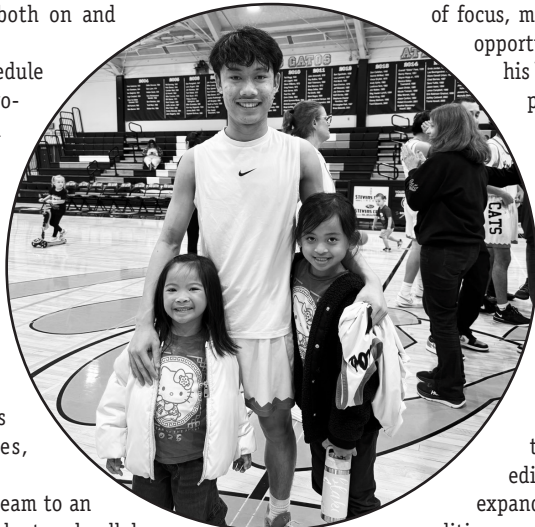
player’s communication and confidence during games. Le does more than just hold the title of captain; he motivates his teammates and when someone feels discouraged, he makes it a priority to maintain a positive attitude. He also emphasized the importance of focus, making sure that his team uses every opportunity to improve, playing a big role in his leadership development. Although Le proudly identifies as a student-athlete, he pointed out that he definitely prioritizes his academics.

Beyond basketball, Le has developed an interest in sports videography. In his earlier years, Le experimented with video editing through a youtube channel, typically centered around gaming content inspired by his cousins. However, his consistency in posting slowly began to decline although his passion for editing never disappeared. Now, he is expanding his knowledge in the world of editing sports highlights.

Le also participates in Boys Team Charity (BTC) offering him the opportunity to give back to the community while spending time with friends. His favorite place to volunteer is Happy Dragon Thrift Shop in Los Gatos, where he assists the manager and enjoys

greeting customers and helping them when needed. To Le, BTC isn’t just accruing volunteer hours, but more about enriching the well-being of others.

Whether it’s leading the basketball team, exploring the editing scene, or contributing to his community, Le approaches every commitment with an open mind and determination. His sophomore year reflects not only athletic success but personal growth, proving that leadership extends far beyond the scoreboard.



photos courtesy M. L.



photos courtesy M. L.

- Baseball earns early success
- Girls' Varsity Soccer wins CCS

# SPORTS

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## LGHS cheer closes the season with team spirit at nationals

by **Tanvi Ambekar**  
*Opinion Editor*

As the winter sports season is drawing to a close, the Los Gatos High School Varsity Cheer Team wrapped up its competition cheer season with a sense of satisfaction. The 18-member team participated in five competitions this season, culminating at the 2026 USA Spirit Nationals in Anaheim, California, from Feb. 19 through 23.



SAY CHEESE: LGHS cheer poses in a pyramid after participating in their competition.

Before nationals, the team competed in various smaller competitions to perfect their routines for the big weekend. In all, they attended four other events, including the Central Coast Section championship. While these competitions do not offer any official titles, sophomore cheerleader **Maia Zaler** recalled that the experience helped to prepare the team for nationals because of the competitive atmosphere.

Their first competition served as the qualifying round for the national competition one month later. The team could only advance if they scored above 80%, which they did. They drove to Anaheim together, excited and ready to give it their all.

Such an intense event was bound to be nerve-wracking. **Danika Wessels**, a senior and captain of the cheer team who has been cheering for three years, pointed out that tournaments "can get pretty competitive because everyone's so [good]" and because the scoring rubric changes every year. This year, the team left frustrated because of a seemingly unfair point deduction during their performance. This prevented the Wildcats from qualifying to participate in the second day of the competition. Regardless, the team made the most out of it by spending the second day touring Disneyland and enjoying the last days of their February break together.

The 2026 season brought its fair share of internal challenges. Two years ago, the cheer team hired a new head coach and, in the words of Wessels, "kind of had to rebuild the program," but thought "it went pretty well" in terms of their final performance, even if they didn't win. In another significant setback, freshman **Cassidy Lancaster** suffered a serious concussion after the team's very first competition, resulting in her absence from all other tournaments aside from USA Spirit.

Looking back, some first-year competition cheerleaders realized that cheering on the sidelines versus during a competition are two very different but rewarding experiences. Zaler confessed that she prefers cheering at football games because of the lower pressure: "In a football game, if you fall [or] mess up, you can just get up. But in competitions, if you wobble or fall, that's points off." Despite this, she reiterated her enthusiasm for continuing to compete throughout her high school career because of the joyfulness of her team, her coaches, and her passion for the sport.

Being a member of the LGHS Cheer Team comes with the pressure and team spirit of many other high school sports. So next time you see the Wildcat squad in action, show your school spirit by cheering along with them!

## Lacrosse builds momentum

by **Lila Zamansky**  
*Media Production Editor*

After a successful 2025 season, the LGHS Girls' and Boys' Lacrosse Teams are preparing for another eventful year. The players participating in the lacrosse program have been consistently training throughout the off-season and are ecstatic to return to the field.

Both teams started the year wasting no time in enhancing their skills during pre-season. Players engaged in weekly weight training sessions and intense practice, which included sprints to increase stamina and various weightlifting exercises to help with strength and technique. Senior and Girls' Varsity Captain **Kirra Bannon** explained, "Pre-season is really good to get everyone's stick back in their hands and stay active. It really helps in the long run for the season, making us stronger



FACE-OFF: Freshman **Eleanora Tremblay** fights for the ball.

and developing our skills." With this extensive process, the teams have seen immense improvement and growth in their overall gameplay. As a result, the lacrosse program will undoubtedly thrive throughout this season.

The varsity girls are starting the season fresh, under a new coaching staff, including Head Coach Madeline Trimpi and assistant coach Tom Bissailon. In their first pre-season game, they faced strong opponents, such as Sacred Heart Prep and Archbishop Mitty High School, where the Wildcats fell 0-19 and 5-17. The losses have only fueled the girls' determination to work harder, as the team is

focused on developing its defense and maintaining a positive mindset. Bannon added, "This year, I hope we strengthen everyone's defense, no matter their position."

For the 2026 season, the lacrosse program has been working on building its team chemistry through bonding activities, practices, and conditioning. Reflecting on this, junior goalkeeper **Sydney Wilson** elaborated, "The team dynamic is really positive and supportive. Everyone works hard, but we also have a lot of fun and goofy moments together, which makes practices and games a really good environment."

The boys' lacrosse team has experienced challenging competition in pre-season as well. Although the team suffered some tough losses against Menlo Atherton High School 8-1 and Saint Francis High School 16-3, they have also had some exciting wins. The Wildcats beat Pacific Grove High School 11-1 and Carmel High School 12-1, with the top scorers including senior **Ben Reilly**, sophomore **Justin Buran**, and freshman **Matvey Barkhatov**. The varsity team is looking forward to replicating their successful 2025 season, during which they earned the opportunity to play in the Central Coast Section (CCS) finals.

With challenging off-season training, tough pre-season games, and encouraging mindsets, the lacrosse program is ready to fulfill its goals for the 2026 season. The LG lacrosse teams will play on Mar. 23rd on Helm Field. Come support your fellow Wildcats!



CRADLE: Senior **Nima Nolan** quickly sprints towards the goal.

## LG baseball dominates again

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

The Los Gatos High School Baseball Team is off to an exciting start in the 2025-2026 season, carrying strong early momentum as the Wildcats move from preseason play into the De Anza League. After showcasing explosive offense in pre-season games and learning from their first defeat, the varsity and junior varsity (JV) teams appear well-positioned for a competitive run this year.

Varsity holds a 2-1 overall record and enters De Anza League play with a 0-0 league slate. They are tied for first in the preseason standings with Wilcox High School, based on last year's results and returning talent. Their pre-season schedule got off to a strong start in the Battle for Atherton Tournament with a 12-1 win over Menlo-Atherton on Feb. 25. The Wildcats followed that performance with a 12-4 win over Menlo High School, highlighting fierce offense by totaling 27 runs in those three games. The team's winning streak came to an end on Feb. 28 with a loss against Junipero Serra High School, a tough competitor. Players described the defeat as a wake-up call, with varsity player **Josh Carlisle** admitting, "We didn't play our best game against them, but it showed us where we need to focus and improve."

The team's chemistry is just as important as the talent. Both varsity and JV credit their strong friendships for improved performance. "We all hang out outside of baseball, and it really makes a difference when we step on the field. We play for each other, not just for ourselves," said **Lucas Bottoms**, a sophomore on JV.

Looking ahead, the Wildcats know future wins will be tough. Junipero Serra, one of the team's biggest rivals, could make a reappearance in the Central Coast Section playoffs, but with confidence in their depth, batting lineup, and team spirit, the Los Gatos baseball team is ready to meet any challenge.



UP TO BAT: Senior **Brady Simon** prepares to hit a home run.

Several players have already stepped up early in the season and are making a noticeable impact on the field. Carlisle has been a reliable presence in the infield, contributing precise hits and strong defense in Los Gatos's early wins. In the 12-4 victory over Menlo School, **Rowen Smith**, a senior on varsity, delivered critical hits that drove in runs during key rallies. With contributions up and down the lineup, the Wildcats have established a strong foundation to build on as De Anza League games continue.

The Wildcats will look to carry this momentum forward as the season progresses. With a mix of talent, depth, and passion, the Los Gatos High School baseball team is shaping up to have a season to remember. They are showing that baseball is not only about winning or losing; it is also about unity and friendship.

(Source: MaxPreps)



VICTORY: Bottoms and his teammates celebrate after a win.

## Track and field races toward victory in their early meets

by **Atharava Pandey**  
*Sports Editor*

The Los Gatos track and field team is ready for another great 2026 spring season. With the pre-season finally coming to an end, in-season meets have officially begun. The work these athletes put in over the long, arduous off-season will now be put on full display in upcoming meets.

The 2026 season started with a home meet against Mountain View High School on Mar. 4. The team competed fiercely, setting new personal records and developing a strong foundation to build on for the rest of the year. According to junior **James Price**, "I have learned a lot from practicing with my team. My coach has helped me a lot



SPRINT: Senior **Kaylee Cross** hands over the baton to senior **Hayden Benjamin**.

in terms of improving my form and technique." As a varsity hurdler, Price specializes in events such as the 110-meter hurdles and the 300-meter hurdles. Price's gratitude towards his team and the coaching staff is a sentiment commonly shared by various members of the LG track team, as teamwork and dedication are important qualities needed to improve in track and field. In the role as team captain, Price faces an important responsibility to serve as a role model for the rest of the team, as he described, "I was honored when I received this role and wanted to do my best in order to continue helping this decorated program."

Los Gatos continued to showcase a powerful performance in the distance races. According to junior varsity runner **Alex Casal Montserrat**, "My team has helped motivate me to run farther and faster. My coaches have also designed a pretty strong workout regimen as well as general help with motivation, focus, and running technique." Casal Montserrat attributes this to being a crucial factor in his success at meets. Overall, he is very proud of the team's accomplishments at this first home meet. On the girls' side, particularly in the 1600-meter race, **Piper Pyle** and **Kiley Horwitz** both scored points, and on the boys' side, **Kevin Sacco** also made a valuable contribution to the team's score.

At the initial home meets, the relay performances were the main standouts. The LG Boys' Varsity 4 by 400 meter relay team defeated Mountain View by a margin of over eight seconds; Girls' Varsity won by over nine seconds. These were large margins, considering how these races can go down to the last second. This victory was an impressive

achievement and reflected the athletes' hard work. The home meet against Palo Alto High School on Mar. 10 showed much of the same, as Los Gatos continued to dominate the relays. Against Palo Alto, Boys' Varsity won by over five seconds, while Girls' Varsity also contributed to the overall team score.

The Los Gatos Track and Field Team has only just begun their season, and they will continue to improve as the year continues. Be sure to check out their track meet at the Saint Francis High School Invitational on Mar. 21.

(Source: Athletic.live)



RELAY: Sophomore **Fin Allan** finishes a one-mile race and smiles at the camera.

# Los Gatos badminton team starts the season strong

by **Siyona Singhal**  
Humor Editor

As the spring sports season begins, the LGHS badminton team has been diligently practicing to gear up for matches. Despite losing 12 seniors, the team has been working hard to train new players, get back into the rhythm, and, of course, earn some victories.

Junior and team captain, **Gavyn Liu**, detailed his own badminton career: "I started playing tennis and transitioned to badminton in freshman year because of my friends. I decided that I liked badminton more than tennis." In his new role, Liu hopes to help the team reach Division One, despite knowing that other teams provide strong competition. Personally, he hopes to qualify for CCS. To Liu, being a captain means being "a symbol of leadership and a source of inspiration."



AND SET: Junior **Reinier Roos** switches sides after securing the first match.

He added, "I want new players to see me and see someone they want to be in the future." Liu emphasized that he wants players to learn that just because they don't start as great players, that doesn't mean they can't get better. So far, Liu has focused on coaching new players and getting them familiar with the team.

Freshman **Gautuam Varadan** is a new badminton player who is quickly improving his skills and settling into the team. Before joining the team, Varadan had no prior badminton experience, but decided to try out anyway because of his family and friends. However, Varadan explained that "you have to be interested first to get the hang of it. The coaches are doing a great job, so it's not that hard, but you have to be committed." Varadan has been training for singles, but recently switched to doubles. This season, he hopes to play in as many styles as he can and to enjoy each match he competes in.

Junior **Ann Jiang** has been on the team for three years, noting that she initially joined because she wanted a spring sport but stayed because she fell in love with badminton. Jiang admitted that her first year of playing was especially hard because "I came in with zero experience. [Junior and captain, **Farah Thariq**] taught me how to hold a racket the day before tryouts." However, in the current season, Jiang has enjoyed the familiar energy of the sport, despite missing the seniors who graduated last year and having to do conditioning. Jiang recalled her favorite moment last season, during League Finals: "My partner and I were playing in a match that we had no chance in, but it was fun to play with her."



LEAD: Senior captain **Andy Zhuo** coaches a junior varsity team from the sideline.

It was at that moment when people were cheering for our team, and we were watching great matches, that I realized my love for the sport." Jiang hopes to reach that level of energy every match.

The team's passion and dedication are especially prominent. Their teamwork reflects the spirit of school athletics: pushing personal limits while supporting each other.

## Swim and Dive has first meet

by **Gowri Sunil**  
News Editor

Coming off a strong 2025 performance, the Los Gatos High School Swim and Dive Teams have officially begun their 2026 season. The first meets mark the start of what both groups hope will be a season filled with strong competition and improvement.

The team had their first meet of the season against Lynbrook High School on Feb. 27. Both LGHS swim teams had a solid start, with the varsity teams and the girls' junior varsity ending victorious. The girls' JV team had an especially significant win by over 90 points. The LGHS dive team also delivered a powerful performance; senior **Ellie Murnin** took first-place in the girls varsity division, while teammates **Alyssa Ackalloor** and **Karis Chan**, both seniors, earned third and fourth place. Junior **Adrian Vieyra**, team captain, held down the fort on the boys' side, placing first in the varsity division. On Mar. 6, the swim teams continued their solid performance, with both girls' swim teams winning

against Gunn High School. Once again, the JV girls' team delivered a crushing victory, winning by more than 40 points.

Ackalloor joined the dive team in her senior year, merging her interests in water sports with her dance experience. Despite being new to the sport, Ackalloor shared that it has already been "really fun, and because of [the team's] small size, everybody knows each other." She noted that the same sense of close-knit community carries on to competitions, where divers from different schools get to know each other better, as their teams are rather small as well. Excited for the future of the team, Vieyra hopes to send more teammates to CCS after being the only qualifier last year. Having a bigger team with consistently strong attendance, Vieyra believes this goal is easily attainable, especially compounded with the team's eager attitude.

Senior and captain **Kiana Koechlin** highlighted the contagious and unique team spirit that drives the LG swim team. As an experienced swimmer herself who enjoys racing the 100-yard breaststroke and 200-yard individual medley, Koechlin emphasized the importance of maintaining a positive mindset. She explained that "life is too short to waste it on putting all your energy into negativity and self-deprecation. Especially with swimming, being such a mental sport, you are fully in charge of your mind." With many newcomers on the team, Koechlin encourages her teammates to embrace each meet with excitement and determination, sharing that "it's not an easy sport, but if you work hard, it will always pay off, so show up like you own the place and race each race like it's your last." She added that the sense of accomplishment and pride felt at the end of each meet makes the hard work all the more worthwhile.

As the season progresses, both teams hope to continue their early success and utilize these opportunities to grow both individually and together as a team.



FOCUS UP: LGHS swim prepares for the last leg of their relay.

## Volleyball aims to win CIF

by **Britt Melinauskas**  
National Editor

The long-awaited boys' volleyball season returns, ramping up to full speed with tournaments and scrimmages to prepare them for their upcoming season. Last year, the Boys' Varsity Volleyball Team placed second in the Santa Clara Valley Athletic League (SCVAL) with an overall record of 11-4 in play. For the first time in Los Gatos High School's history, the varsity team qualified for the Open Division for Central Coast Section (CCS) play. After a 1-3 loss to Santa Cruz High School, the Wildcats transitioned to the California Interscholastic Federation (CIF) Norcals, where they lost in the quarterfinals. After a successful high school season, the varsity team reflected on their performance and began focusing on how they could improve and grow stronger for the next season. Returning player senior **Sean Slover** received SCVAL All-League First Team and Junior of the Year, and senior **Reily Nguyen** earned All-League Second Team for the 2025 winter season. Now, both players are team captains and will lead their team to a thriving season, using what they have learned from the previous season to continue improving.

At the Harbor High School Tournament, the varsity team placed first in the silver bracket. Freshman **Andrew Jin** claimed that much of their early-season success has been due to their coaches, **Nicole Ciari**, **Morgan Iverson**, and **Aylene Ilkson**, as they are "very supportive and give great feedback." The boys' volleyball team played San Lorenzo Valley High School, claiming victory both times with scores of 2-0 and 2-1. They also defeated Scotts Valley 2-1 and Morro Bay 2-0, showcasing their dominance, with their only loss coming in a 0-2 match against Archbishop Mitty. Jin commented, "It took a few games to get into our groove since

it was the first time we played together outside of practice and scrimmages. After that, we found our momentum." Junior **Marc Del Prado Garcia** added, "It was tough. There's a lot of good teams there, but we did our best."

Now, the Boys' Varsity Volleyball Team is focusing on their chemistry as they learn to play with different individuals, especially since league play is around the corner. Del Prado Garcia asserted, "So far we have taken many measures to ensure that we communicate well with one another." All of the team members agree that winning the league and moving to securing wins in the regional matches is crucial to their accepted idea of what they want to achieve. The Wildcats plan to cause numerous upsets this year, aiming to be recognized as one of the league's top teams. Be sure to cheer on Los Gatos Boys' Volleyball team as they take on their upcoming season with determination!  
(Source: MaxPreps)



SPIKE: Senior **Nolan Harr** prepares to ace the other team.

# Los Gatos Girls' Soccer wins CCS Championship

by **Jordan Park**  
Website Manager

This Los Gatos High School soccer season was one for the history books. With the girls' team taking home the Division 1 Central Coast Section (CCS) championship and the boys finishing fourth in the De Anza League, both teams celebrated an incredibly successful season.

The girls closed out league play by defeating Fremont High School 10-0 and earning 6-1 victories over Santa Clara High School and Los Altos High School. These wins secured first place in the De Anza League and an undefeated league record for Los Gatos. Moving into the open division of CCS, the Cats faced Leland High School on Feb. 21. After losing to Leland last year, the girls were eager for another chance to face

this particular opponent. This time, however, Leland proved no match for the Wildcats, as the game ended in an impressive 8-1 victory. The momentum continued into the quarterfinals on Feb. 24 when LGHS defeated Archbishop Mitty 4-0. The CCS championship game then took place on Feb. 27 against St. Francis High School and quickly turned into a nail-biter with both teams showcasing incredible talent. Senior **Ale Munneke** and sophomore **Bella Cain** led the LG offense, pushing the team upfield and creating dangerous crosses and shots on goal. Meanwhile, freshman **Mariana Nanez** and juniors **Avery Edson** and **Noe Wedemeyer** secured a tight back line, winning headers and battling St. Francis forwards. Neither team managed to score during the 90-minute game or the two ten-minute overtime periods, forcing the game into penalty kicks. With an unbelievable save from senior goalkeeper **Cora Bryant**, the Cats prevailed and won the Division 1 CCS championship. The season wasn't over yet, though, as the girls headed into NorCal play the following week, where they secured another win against Vacaville High School on Mar. 3 at Helm Field. Two days later, they faced Bishop O'Dowd. After a hard-fought match, the Cats fell 2-1. While the loss was heartbreaking, it did not overshadow the amazing season the team had. The Wildcats finished as De Anza League champions and Division 1 CCS champions and brought home multiple individual awards, including League MVP and Defensive Player of the Year.

The boys' team ended league play with notable success. On Feb. 10, they played Wilcox High School and won 3-1. After that, the boys lost to Santa Clara High School and Los Altos High School, 4-2 and 4-0, respectively. The boys advanced to Division 3 CCS the following week and faced Homestead on Feb. 21. After 90 minutes,

the score stood at 3-3, sending the teams into overtime and eventually to penalty kicks. The boys gave it their all but were defeated, ending their season.

The teams should be exceptionally proud of what they have accomplished this season, and there is no doubt they will only improve, as both the girls' and boys' squads have more than enough talent to contribute to the program's success in the years to come.  
(Source: MaxPreps)



READY POSITION: LGHS defenders regroup as the other team attacks.



PRESSURE BUILDS: LGHS players storm the goal to maintain their offense.



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# POM: Callum Schweitzer commits to Yale for football

by **Tori Schubert***People Editor*

Captain and quarterback of the LGHS Varsity Football Team, senior **Callum Schweitzer** is now preparing for his first season at Yale University. This natural leader strives for success in all facets of life, while guiding his teammates to do the same.

Schweitzer discovered his passion for football in eighth grade, when he first attempted the sport. Prior to this, Schweitzer played basketball and baseball, continuing with the latter until his sophomore year. His decision to quit baseball came out of a fondness for football. He remarked on the difficulty of training for both sports simultaneously, having to throw consistently for each position. Schweitzer's high school career began with initial invitations to join the varsity team for Central Coast Section (CCS) in his freshman and sophomore years before he officially made varsity his junior year and became captain as a senior.

Throughout his time on the team, Schweitzer earned his place as a leader, learning what it takes to guide his team to success each season. Both on and off the field, Schweitzer pointed out the best way to support his teammates: "Show up for every single guy and be there for every player." Carrying this mindset with him during and beyond the season, Schweitzer became a valuable asset to the team and a reliable friend to lean on. His athletic journey did not come

without its challenges; Schweitzer faced stress and pressure as the starting quarterback, while also trying to balance school and other extracurriculars. However, he quickly learned to apply himself athletically and academically, emphasizing the importance of sticking to weekly schedules and staying on top of his work. Having established a successful balance for himself, Schweitzer was recently named National Football Foundation and College Hall of Fame Northern California Scholar-Athlete.

His many feats paid off when Schweitzer received an offer and committed to Yale University on Jan. 5. Guiding Schweitzer's decision to commit was the welcoming coaching staff and the support they showed toward him and other players. Schweitzer attributed his interest in the school to the football team's "4 for 40" program, which involves mentorships and opportunities to guide graduates through life after their four years of college. He reflected, "They're committed to more than just football. They're committed to life after football." Schweitzer plans to major in economics and recently visited the university, where the beautiful campus further strengthened his commitment to the school.

Over the course of his four high school seasons, Schweitzer learned numerous valuable lessons from his teammates, stressing the importance of a strong community. He elaborated, "A lot of places don't

have the brotherhood that we have, because we've grown up together throughout our whole life. The most important thing is the community and the love we have for each other, which shows up on the field on Friday nights." This star senior has truly made his mark on those around him, and although his presence will be missed on gamedays, his teammates look forward to seeing his future unfold throughout college and beyond.



READY-SET-HIKE: Schweitzer targets his wide receiver and prepares to make a throw.

# Los Gatos basketball finishes up successful CCS playoffs

by **Kloe Adams***Games Creator*

After an eventful season, 2025-26 LGHS basketball is wrapped up! From the first pre-season games, both the boys' and girls' teams demonstrated immense potential for a strong season. This manifested as they crushed the opposition throughout league, conference, and state play.

The boys' basketball season began in November when Head Coach **Nick Ward**, alongside assistant coaches **Saumon Tahmassebi** and **Steve Seandel**, put together a dream team consisting of three freshmen, five sophomores, two juniors, and six seniors. From the second they hit the court during their first league game on Dec. 4, 2025, the LGHS boys made sure to give it their

all. Fighting their way to the Santa Clara Valley De Anza League championship against Milpitas High School, LGHS lost to Milpitas 36-49 despite their valiant efforts. Earning second place in the league, the boys moved on to the Division III Californian Interscholastic Federation (CIF) State play. During their first State game, LGHS defeated Brave Christian High School 59-46. Two days later, facing off against Willow Glen, the boys lost, ending their season, but having gained an abundance of heartening memories. Senior **Dionysis Maroudas**'s favorite moment from the season was "the CCS final where we beat Carlmont High School; that was really hype."

Similarly, competing fiercely since November, girls' basketball had an explosive season led by Head Coach **Sara Quilici Giles**, and her assistant coaches **Nick Carmen** and **Katarina Knezevic**. Composed of three sophomores, six juniors, and four seniors, the girls impressively navigated play on the court, gaining the title of the Santa Clara Valley De Anza League champions. With the championship title in hand, the girls' basketball team began competing in CIF State play. Continuing their momentum during the first round of states, LGHS beat Foothill High School 69-54. Unfortunately, the girls lost to Valley Christian High School in the next round in a close battle. Reflecting on the season, senior **Rita Zhou** said, "Despite how it ended, I know we did good. We did a lot better than most teams expected of us because we lost a lot of seniors last year. We competed well and worked together as a team really showing our improvement over the season which is the most important part."

As the season came to an end, the seniors on both the boys' and girls' basketball teams made the most of their final games and celebrated during their senior night ceremony. Senior **Will Campbell** commented, "Senior night was an amazing experience. We were all thankful and feeling pretty sentimental." Graduating this year, LGHS seniors made sure to help prepare the future of the basketball program. Sophomore **Jenna Webb** emphasized, "The seniors really helped us learn to show our leadership on and off the court. I know next year the upperclassmen will be ready to lead the team like our seniors did this year."

Without a doubt, LGHS basketball had an unforgettable year that left fans wanting more. Stay tuned as the program continues to train and develop its players to dominate in subsequent seasons. (Source: MaxPreps)



SENIOR NIGHT: Girls' varsity seniors take a picture before their big game.



SAY CHEESE: Fans and players get together to pose for photo after game.

# LG wrestling has success

by **Chloe Wilson***Culture Editor*

The Los Gatos High School Wrestling season has come to an end with multiple athletes placing in prestigious competitions such as the Central Coast Section Championships (CCS) and even the CIF (California Interscholastic Federation) State Championships.



TAKEDOWN: LG Wildcat pins opponent in order to win round.

Hayden lost to a player from Gilroy High School after putting up a tough match, resulting in a score of 5-3 during the ultimate tiebreaker period. Before the tournament, Head Coach **Greg Valera** expressed, "The expectations are great, and we're going right back to business to start taking on the next thing." Hayden reflected on his experiences this year, as he explained, "I am just excited for next year, to win some of these tournaments I did not quite win and hopefully win CCS next year." Sophomore **Trajan Pannell** reiterated that the group's goal for CCS was to "work together as a team, build each other up, and show our hard work." Pannell placed fifth in the 132-pound weight class of the CCS tournament.

After CCS, the team headed to the CIF State Championships, and Ramirez placed eighth in the state of California. Hayden also described the difference of the state tournament in comparison to others: "There is a lot more emphasis on state, and it is way bigger than most other tournaments we go to." The CIF competition took place at the Dignity Health Arena in Bakersfield, California, from Feb. 26-28. Ramirez competed against a player from Brawley High School in Brawley, California, winning with a score of 7-5 by a final decision.

Over the course of the 2025-2026 season, LG wrestling displayed an immense amount of team chemistry throughout their many wins. Despite losing key players and upperclassmen from the previous year, the team persevered and worked with strong players, building off individual and team successes. The team has many consistent underclassmen to continue this legacy as they begin to prepare for the 2026-2027 season. (Sources: Cal Grappler, CIF Central Coast Section, LGHS Athletics, Los Gatos)

# Girls' softball starts strong

by **Abby Coven***News Editor*

With powerful pitches, a flawless defense, and an impenetrable outfield, the LGHS Girls' Varsity Softball Team is rounding the bases towards a triumphant season. The Cats are hoping to repeat last year's result, where they went undefeated and placed first in the Santa Clara Valley De Anza League. During pre-season training, the players engaged in cardio exercises tailored to enhance their softball skills. Together, they also went on weekly hikes on the Los Gatos Creek Trail to Novatiata Park. Before their season began, the team played two scrimmage games against San Lorenzo and Saratoga High Schools.

The Varsity team captains this year are **Grace Tucker** and **Sophia Krish**, who, along with Head Coach **Randy Frey**, are dedicated to maintaining the team's strength and impressive collaboration. But the team would not be complete without the three other returning seniors **Olivia Sickels**, **Tessa Lillenstein**, and **Kylynn Cook**.

The team kicked off the 2025-26 season with a big win over Scotts Valley High School in their first game, prevailing with a score of 11-1. The first home game was on Mar. 5 against the Ann Sobrato High School Bulldogs. To fire up before games, the team builds spirit with home game rituals like arriving early to apply eyeblack and style their hair with braids and ribbons for a fierce and fashionable touch. The Cats came away with a 3-2 victory in an exciting game that fired up the home crowd.

Sickels scored the opening run during the first inning. The Cats had the upper hand until the top of the third inning when Sobrato made it over the home plate for two runs. To seal the third out,



HUDDLE: The softball team gets together before the game.

catcher **Ava Norquist** made an incredible diving catch on a bunt before it hit the ground. In the fourth inning, juniors **Danica DeSantis** and **Cate Zeman** hit forceful balls to the outfield, but the inning ended with no points. The bases were loaded at the bottom of the sixth, and junior **Meredith Harris**, running for Norquist, earned a run to tie the game. At the top of the seventh and final inning, Sobrato was at bat with one out and a player on third base. The Cats then made a thrilling double play with catcher **Haley Betti** throwing to first base, and before the runner from second could tag the plate, the first baseman threw the ball back to Betti in time. When the Cats next got up to bat, Tucker got on base, and Norquist hit a powerful grounder to left field, enabling Tucker to score the last run and win the game.

With a 2-0 record, the varsity team is already starting its season off strong. Next on the agenda for the Girls' Varsity Softball Team is a tournament in Watsonville. They encourage LGHS students and the community to come watch how their undoubtedly exciting season will unfold.