

# El Gato

THE STUDENT NEWSPAPER OF LOS GATOS HIGH SCHOOL

A. Coven

## LGHS Green Team celebrates Earth Week

by Atharava Pandey and Arnav Singhal

Sports Editors

The LGHS Green Team just concluded its annual Earth Week celebration from Apr. 19 to 24. It included many interactive events for the student body in order to raise awareness about environmental sustainability. Led by LGHS student coordinators senior **Andy Qiu** and junior **Vivian Fintz**, as well as AP Environmental Science teacher and group advisor **Amelia DeLaPaz**, the Green Team created a valuable event promoting eco-friendly awareness.



courtesy R. Abdollahi

TIDY UP: LGHS students spend the day picking up garbage in Oak Meadow.

To start the week strong, the group hosted a trash cleanup in Oak Meadow Park on Apr. 19. Junior **Leila Liu** attended the event and remarked, "After attending the clean up, I really felt a sense of warmth after giving back to my community." Apr. 20 was Meatless Monday, when all meals at the cafeteria were prepared without animal products. That day, the group hosted a Family Feud game at lunch on the front lawn. A Trashketball game followed on Apr. 21, with a similar emphasis on having fun while learning about the environment. On Apr. 22, the Green Team hosted a film festival at the theater during tutorial, showcasing a variety of short films on sustainability. Students also had the opportunity to plant their own seedlings in the school garden on Apr. 23 to make a more personal impact on nurturing the environment. Finally, the week capped off with a grand Pictionary game on the front lawn on Apr. 24. Regarding the events, senior **Eduardo Lasso** said, "The goal is to get as much student involvement as possible and help them learn about larger change."

In recognizing the importance of Earth Week, Qiu mentioned, "Obviously, climate change is getting worse with the new environmental policies. I really want to make sure we are doing better for the environment." With temperatures reaching new extremes in various parts of the world and fossil fuel use continuing to soar, it is more critical than ever to recognize that the environment requires our attention. According to Green Team member, sophomore **Arya Shamain**, "Protecting the planet isn't just a distant goal, but something we must actively engage with right now." Failure to take adequate action against climate change will significantly impact the quality of life in the future.

The Green Team's ongoing objective is vital, but it is only possible with complete collaboration from the student body. Qiu advised, "Do as much as you can to lower your own emissions on the environment and try your best to protect where you live." The point of recognizing Earth Week is not to make radical changes to our lifestyles; instead, it is to become cognizant of our choices and understand their potentially harmful effects on the environment.

With a successful Earth Week in hand, the Green Team now looks forward to its next initiative: restarting recycling in classrooms without contamination. One event won't solve climate change, but for the Green Team, that's not the goal. If even a handful of students leave with a new habit or a new perspective, they see it as a sign of success.



A. Singhal

CLEAN SWEEP: Green Team invites students to play eco-friendly Family Feud.

## Annual art show features student pieces

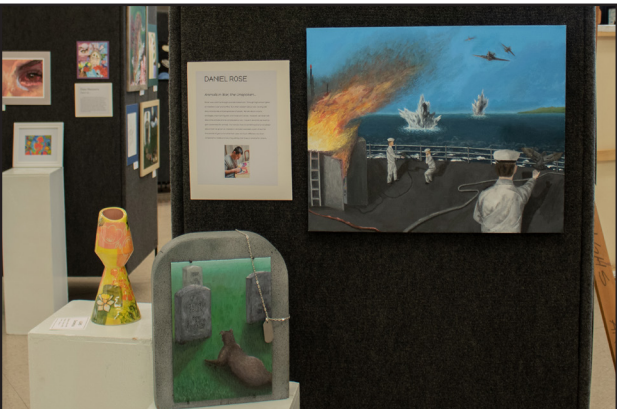
by Tanvi Ambekar

Opinion Editor

As the 2025-26 school year draws to a close, the LGHS Electives Department highlighted their students' work in the Annual Electives Showcase on Apr. 16, 17, and 18. The exhibit included work from LGHS's Art, Ceramics, Digital Photography, Drama, Drawing, Fashion, Graphic Design, Metals, Music, and Painting classes.

Although the various courses require very different skillsets, every student who participated shares a passion for art. Sophomore **Viola Pap**, a first-year Ceramics student, said that she enjoys **Augustina Matsui's** class because "I like working with my hands and not just sitting behind a desk." She recalled that the most memorable piece she displayed at the show was a "beautiful ceramic pumpkin, and it had a human face." Pap's pumpkin was among many Ceramics students' works featured at the exhibit.

For senior **Daniel Rose**, the show provided an opportunity to explore his interest in war from a more unusual angle. As he explained in his portfolio, "We only talk about the stories and perspectives of people. We talk about victors, strategies, important figures, and those who've lost. However, we never talk about the animals who've contributed to war... animals have been a part of war for thousands of years, and while their uses are much different now compared to medieval times, they still lay their lives on the line for others." Enrolled this year in both Studio Art and Art 4 with Art teacher **Mark Yanowsky**, Rose has devoted countless hours throughout his high school career to various creative pursuits.



LIVELY PALETTE: LGHS art show displays Daniel Rose's war-themed artwork.

Marking her last exhibit at LGHS, the show was particularly meaningful to senior **Alina Prostota**, who elaborated upon her central project: "I'm exploring the idea of Christianity and how the moral teachings of the Bible have held up over the years. I have one piece about Abraham and Isaac, one piece about the use of water throughout the Bible, and one piece of the Virgin Mary and Jesus." These pieces will make up the core of her AP Art portfolio. In terms of the overall show, Prostota enthused, "I always look forward to having the school see all the work [the art students] put in. Especially with the school being so STEM focused, I think art needs a little more love and attention." The showcase was an opportunity to underscore the diversity and beauty that LGHS students create throughout the year.



photos A. Coven

COMING ALIVE: Milla Petersen adds to painting of Principal Dave Poetzing.

The artists who presented at the display shared similar sentiments. **Car Nauss**, a current junior and Art 2 student, said that their favorite part of art is the freedom: "I get to experiment with color." Junior **Alex Andrey Olvera Nagamedianova** agreed; his favorite piece is a linocut of Ralsei, an animated character that serves as the primary inspiration for a majority of his work. These two students really appreciated the free reign they have when it comes to their creativity, and both expressed enthusiasm for continuing the program in the years to come.

About showing his work in a more public setting, Olvera Nagamedianova admitted, "I'm a little bit shy because it's my interest, but, yeah, of course [I was excited]." For these five artists and so many more, the LGHS Electives Showcase offered a unique platform for them to present their work to the school and the broader Los Gatos community.

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courtesy M. Leathem

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courtesy flickr

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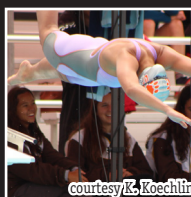
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courtesy KK, Koechlin

# TOM: Kim Burlinson fosters a supportive community

by **Tori Schubert and Julia Valencia**  
People and Opinion Editors

As **Kim Burlinson** finishes her 27th year of teaching at Los Gatos High School, she continues to foster a positive and welcoming environment where students feel supported, both academically and personally. Teaching biology as well as supporting students taking credit recovery courses in Strategic Learning, Burlinson strives to be the mentor that she had in her high school years. She aids her students in finding their passions, not only at LGHS, but also in their future lives.

Burlinson's path to teaching began from a conversation with her high school biology teacher. Following her conscientious refusal to experiment on earth worms, her teacher prompted her to imagine a different curriculum that would cater to her learning style. This newfound enthusiasm for education sparked Burlinson's love for science, leading her to major in Aquatic Biology at UC Santa Barbara. With the goal of becoming the Educational Director at Monterey Bay Aquarium, Burlinson took on a variety of instructing roles including an art class aide, an elementary science lab technician, and a role at Independence High School. However, when LGHS offered her a job providing mental health and wellness resources, Burlinson could not pass up the opportunity to help students.

Currently, Burlinson teaches a wide range of subjects, allowing her to connect with a large population of students, while also educating them on topics she is passionate about. She described the differences of the struggles that modern high school students now face, reflecting,



NATURE: Burlinson enjoys a hike alongside her daughter and dog.

"I think [high school] is harder now than it was for me because every one of your friends is walking around with a video camera in their pocket and that puts a lot more pressure on you guys." As an educator, Burlinson strives to be a comfort to each of her students, becoming someone they can trust and rely upon as they navigate high school. She explained, "If you can find the place where you belong, whether that's a sport, a social group, or a club, high school is so much easier."

Outside of school, Burlinson spends the majority of her time with her family. She joked that "my kids are older and don't want to spend as much time with me," but added more sincerely, "I feel really lucky. I still have both my parents, and I have two great kids." She also shared that she, her husband, and her dog, a Great Pyrenees and Labrador mix, are frequent visitors to the beach.

Burlinson's nearly three decades at LGHS reflect not only her dedication to the school, but to her students and their futures. Through creating an inclusive and supportive classroom, Burlinson's commitment to helping students thrive is evident.



CELEBRATE: Burlinson and her family take a selfie during the holidays.

## LGHS FBLA team achieves success at competition

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

Los Gatos High School's Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) has seen remarkable success throughout the 2026 season, most recently competing statewide over spring break. The team came home with a number of impressive wins and achievements, showcasing their talents in various business fields.

FBLA is an organization focused on educating high school students about different aspects of business, such as insurance, public speaking, economics, and business management. Students then compete with schools across the country by taking exams, making speeches, and creating product pitches.

LGHS students traveled to Dougherty Valley High School for their first competition, The Bay Section Leadership Conference, on Feb. 7. With a total of seven LGHS students attending across all grades, this marked the beginning of their successful season. Juniors and club presidents **Arnav Raghavan** and **Andrew Leathem** placed sixth and eighth in the entrepreneurship and impromptu speaking categories, respectively. Sophomore **Aksh Gupta** discovered his passion for FBLA following his recruitment by Raghavan, who recognized the sophomore's potential. Since then, Gupta's enthusiasm has shone

through his performances, placing second out of 20 in the insurance and risk management section at his first competition. Elated about this new opportunity to expand upon his business skills, he described the impact of FBLA: "I have learned a lot about conducting business operations, which has become a passion of mine beyond just the club, and I have been able to apply my skills in multiple aspects of my life."

Junior **Leila Liu** is an active member of FBLA and recently traveled to Anaheim with the group to compete. At the state competition, Liu competed in the marketing and retail management divisions. She noted that marketing was her favorite event in which she placed an impressive seventh despite challenging competitors from all across California. Although the competition was strong, Liu stated, "FBLA, particularly marketing, was a very good experience, and it has cultivated my interest in both marketing and business." Additionally, the competitors were immediately introduced to an interactive community where they could mingle and explore Anaheim with people from all over the state. All of the Los Gatos participants in this event recounted that competing at the state level was an amazing experience, as it was a fun yet challenging bridge between socializing and learning.

Looking ahead, next year's leadership conference will be held in November, also in Anaheim, and the State Leadership Conference will take place in San Jose, which is a much more convenient location for the students. **Monique Leathem**, LGHS math teacher and the team's advisor, affirmed, "every student showed enthusiasm and is already excited about returning next year." The LGHS FBLA chapter is thrilled with their triumphs over spring break, and each participant is ecstatic to take on even more tournaments to come. (Source: California FBLA)



WELL DONE: LGHS FBLA squad poses with their award at the BSLC.

## Leadership hosts FNL show

by **Gowri Sunil**  
News Editor

On Apr. 17, LGHS hosted its annual Friday Night Live show (FNL), a night filled with a multitude of talents including singing, dancing, and comedy. LGHS's leadership crew organized the event, with junior class presidents **Claire Kim** and **Silvia Miletich** leading the production and management.

Preparation for the event began the week of the show, with auditions held on Tuesday, Apr. 14, followed by two days of rehearsals. Miletich explained that the auditions were held to prioritize commitment in order "to create a good opportunity for everyone to perform and showcase their talent." This year's show featured 12 acts, including both solo and group performances. The scheduled acts began with non-senior groups, followed by an intermission, and ended with the senior spotlight, which Miletich shared was meant to "congratulate the seniors for their last performance at the school."

Although attendance was initially sparse, the theater quickly filled up as the show went on. The event opened with the MP3 Club's rendition of American Teenager by Ethel Cain; other acts included K-pop dance routine to Easy by Le Sserafim, an Andy Kaufman inspired comedy skit, and a variety of instrumental and vocal music.

Other than the planned acts, the emcees also introduced interactive competitions, like a push-up contest where nine participants were spontaneously called from the crowd, and a trivia game. Sophomore **Kate Kinczel**, an audience member and push-up competitor, noted that the trivia game was

especially humorous because of some unfortunately confident answers regarding the boiling point of water and the spelling of the word "accommodate." In addition to the engaging contests, Kim recalled an especially memorable part of the night when one of the emcees, sophomore **Alexa Cross**, brought a group of young dancers onstage, where they surprised the audience with an impressive, simultaneous flip.



IN SYNC: Bae and Allen perform a song together at FNL.

Music enthusiast and sophomore **Nar Ucar**, who played the keyboard for the MP3 Club, explained her eagerness to participate in the show: "I love music, and when I was asked to play keyboard, I kind of jumped at the opportunity." She added that despite the quick turnaround time, the rehearsals helped the group feel confident onstage.

Having performed in the show during her freshman and sophomore years, senior **Chesle Bae** returned in a duet with fellow senior **Ishaan Allen**, presenting an acoustic take of the Tyler Childers song All Your'n during the senior spotlight. Bae commented that their performance came together after the two began playing in the music building one day and later decided to turn it into a piece for this year's Friday Night Live event.

To conclude the show, participating seniors gathered onstage for a final bow, marking the end of their last performance at LGHS and also another successful Friday Night Live.



LIVE WIRE: The MP3 Club's performance opens the show.

## Wildcats enjoy Spirit Week

by **Sahil Muthukrishnan and Atharava Pandey**  
Culture and Sports Editors

Los Gatos High School students showcased their Wildcat pride during Spring Spirit Week, held from Mar. 30 to Apr. 3. LGHS Leadership organized another phenomenal event that featured new lunchtime games, engaging themes for each day, and a school-wide rally on Friday. As always, this spirit week was pivotal in maintaining school spirit and enhancing student camaraderie.

In the days leading up to the event, leadership students from each grade level spent countless hours decorating the hallway in the main building. Each of the four grades was in charge of their own section of the hallway with different Disney-based themes: freshmen were Marvel, sophomores were Rapunzel, juniors were Cars, and seniors were Star Wars. In that same vein, teachers evaluated and scored each hallway section to award extra points for each grade's total. Regarding the preparation of the hallway, junior leadership member **Mehul Patel** said, "It was really great seeing four weeks' worth of work come together, all in one."

Leadership students also hosted daily lunchtime activities, which were part of the weekly competition among grades to earn the most spirit points. Highlights included an Ultimate Frisbee game among all four grades. Junior **Peter Malone** commented, "I play frisbee a lot at lunch with my friends, so it's nice to put my practice to use competitively." Malone encouraged others to participate in games, as students are usually supportive and don't blame their grade's representatives for any shortcomings.



SCORE: LGHS students enthusiastically wear their jerseys.

The dress-day lineup began on Monday with Pajama Day, followed on Tuesday with Back to the 2000s Day. Wednesday continued with Disney Duo Day, and Thursday was Jersey Day, where students wore jerseys inspired by their favorite athletes and teams. Friday concluded with the familiar Colors Day for the rally, where freshmen wore green, sophomores blue, orange for juniors, and black for seniors. Throughout the week, there was a clear demonstration of school involvement, as students of all grade levels tried to help their class earn as many points as possible.

While the entire student body enjoyed the games and class enthusiasm, they were particularly gratifying for those in leadership who put it all together. Senior **Kaley Do**, one of LGHS's ASB Spirit Representatives, was among many who put hours of effort into organizing the hallway, rally games, and scripting, among other things. While the process undoubtedly had its challenges with many variables to account for, Do shared that it was rewarding, with one of her favorite aspects being "the community within leadership. We were



COMFY: Freshmen participate on Monday's Pajama Day.

all working together. Also, just seeing the student section being super excited, wanting to participate in the rallies, and reacting to the games." Do and her peers' work paid off on Friday with a highly energetic and entertaining rally.

Like all spirit weeks, Spring Spirit Week provided a platform to showcase the unique community and pride we have at LGHS. And, like all spirit weeks, Spring Spirit Week confirmed: once a Wildcat, always a Wildcat!

# LG Anti-Racism Coalition addresses ICE's presence

by **Kat Littfin**  
Editorial Editor

On Mar. 13, Santa Clara County Supervisor Margaret Abe-Koga recognized the Los Gatos Anti-Racism Coalition (LGARC) as a Presidential Community Hero in District 5. The group has been responsible for several mobilization efforts throughout the town in light of recent national events and has been active in the community since its inception.

Los Gatos citizens founded the coalition in 2020, when LGHS students held an anti-racism protest in June of that year. Since then, the group has regularly advocated for “graduates from [Los Gatos] schools to possess a functional understanding of systemic racism in history, literature, and our daily lives.” According to the website, they also strive for “a larger role for unarmed and specialized social workers in public safety and a smaller role for armed police officers.” To achieve this mission, the LGARC has advocated for affordable housing and police reform at town council meetings, published works in their publication, *The Salon*, and recently launched a rental assistance program aimed to prevent evictions of community members unable to afford rising rent costs.



GATHER: Members meet in front of LG Library to protest.

This year, the coalition has been primarily focused on addressing the heightened presence of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officers in nearby communities. Throughout January and February, the organization hosted events like a

Know-Your-Rights training in partnership with the Rapid Response Network to prepare for encounters with ICE agents. They had activities like whistle packing and creating posters and presented information on how to aid local efforts against ICE encroachment. Furthermore, the group hosted silent vigils on several Saturday mornings throughout the beginning of the year to stand in solidarity with those killed and detained by federal enforcement officials. This work is what earned the organization recognition from the County; as Supervisor Abe-Koga stated in an Instagram post, “The LGARC raises awareness of inequities in the Bay Area and mobilizes folks to fight for concrete and anti-racist change.”

The LGARC and other organizations in Los Gatos have also been involved in working against the increasing ICE presence. The Los Gatos Town Council’s Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Commission has started a “Handwriting the Constitution” project that has been endorsed by the council. The description of the project reads, “It would be part of a series of participatory art events, bringing together Los Gatos residents to transcribe the entire U.S. Constitution by hand onto foam boards with ink pens,” according to the Mercury News.

Between the LGARC and efforts from community members, there are many ways to become politically active in our town.

(Sources: Los Gatos Anti-Racism Coalition, Mercury News)



MARCH ON: Citizens participate in anti-ICE protests.

## The VTA faces budget cuts

by **Siyona Singhal**  
Humor Editor

Public transit is a cornerstone of community and a valuable service for those who lack their own means of transportation. It also serves as a gathering space for people to foster community camaraderie. Public transit also mitigates traffic and congestion, an especially important factor in Los Gatos.



DISSEMBARK HERE: LGHS students ride the bus to school.

However, due to low post-pandemic use, declining revenue, and increasing maintenance costs, Bay Area transit agencies have declared over \$800 million in debt. The Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) projects a \$15 million deficit by 2027. These debts are leading to agencies planning drastic service cuts, such as reducing evening and weekend service, creating longer wait times, and potentially eliminating routes.

In response to these budget restrictions, the Connect Bay Area Transit Initiative, a grassroots coalition of local businesses, transit activists, and Bay Area residents, is working to establish a sales tax measure on the 2026 ballot, which would raise over \$1 billion to support public transit services. The measure would impose a 0.5% sales tax in Santa Clara and all Bay Area counties to raise money to help expand transportation services. In San Francisco, the implemented tax would be 1%.

Though it may be easy for many people to ignore the issue of public transportation, it is important for Los Gatos. Past VTA cuts have caused traffic to intensify downtown, an already congested area. Furthermore, in the past, VTA collaborated with the Town Council on programs like the Bus Pass Pilot

program, where the agency offered discounted group passes for high school students. This program could become a significant help to Los Gatos town members, especially individuals who lack a means of transportation. Unfortunately, due to the financial state of VTA, programs like these are in jeopardy.

A transit sales tax shows real promise for the future of transportation in our community. With this measure in place, transportation would not only be more reliable but also cleaner, more efficient, and accessible to a wider range of residents. Improved transit can reduce traffic congestion, lower greenhouse gas emissions, and make it easier for students, workers, and families alike to arrive at their destinations without depending entirely on cars. It would also strengthen connections between Los Gatos and the surrounding areas, supporting both the local economy and regional mobility.



NEXT STOP: VTA utilizes buses for frequent arrivals.

In order to get the measure on the November ballot, the Connect Bay Area Transit Initiative needs people to sign their petition. Anyone in the Bay Area age 18 and older may attend petition-singing events, which can be found on their website. If you are interested in helping pass this measure, contact LGHS juniors **Nova Jayaraj** and **Eli Asheghian**, who are assisting with the effort. In addition, spread the word, educate the adults around you, and consider volunteering at a petition-signing event.

(Sources: Los Gatan, National Today)

## Town remodels structures

by **Abby Coven**  
News Editor

Earlier this year, the Town of Los Gatos closed parts of the Oak Meadow Park playground, fencing off the iconic World War II airplane and removing both the historic fire truck and wooden train. Many local residents lament that these unconventional and authentic play structures have inspired the imaginations of children for decades. Given how influential these play areas have been in the lives of Los Gatos families, social media commentary on this topic has been growing.

A Town of Los Gatos Parks and Sustainability Commission Report dated Jul. 31, 2025 cited safety concerns in its review of the conditions of certain playground equipment. The report identified the jet plane and fire truck as “not being traditional



VACANT: The town removed fire truck from Oak Meadow. equipment designed for playground use.” The wooden train was deemed an “aging structure that has fallen into disrepair.” Town officials recommended full fencing around the airplane, which they now have, to protect children from unsafe recreation. Staff intends to add a sign that details the plane’s history. Currently, the only sign states, “Airplane is A Display Only DO NOT TOUCH.” They also intend to replace the retired structures with one piece of equipment that will “retain a [similar] transportation...theme.”

The historic Air Force plane is a Lockheed T-33A “T-Bird” Jet Trainer that was acquired and installed in 1974. Long time resident James Vanderlaan served on the Los Gatos Parks Commission in the 1960s and 70s. In his time on the commission he arranged the donation of a World War II airplane for Oak Meadow

Park by working with Town Mayor Ruth Cannon’s husband, William, a manager at Lockheed Missiles and Space Company. For liability reasons, they decided to remove the engine and fill the front portion with concrete making it safer for kids to play. The current jet actually replaced the first airplane in Oak Meadow Park, which was an Air Force F86 Sabre, a fighter jet used in the Korean War during the early 1950s.



TAKE OFF: The fighter jet is blocked off from recreation.

The decommissioned fire truck was another popular playground attraction because of its authentic look, large steering wheel, and big tires. Located near the bucket swings, the fire engine and the wooden train were longtime playground features. Sophomore **Sara Bluestone** reminisced about regular visits to the Oak Meadow Park playground as a child: “It feels like they are removing a piece of my childhood.”

**Jeff Collins**, LGHS graduate of the class of 2005, grew up playing on the fighter jet and fire truck as a young child. When asked his opinion on the park’s remodeling, Collins said, “I am a very big believer that change is not always a bad thing ... However, to remove the iconic firetruck and fence in the air force fighter jet, and not try to replace it with something similar for new generations to enjoy is not only illogical, but unfair to future generations.” Collins cautions the Town about replacing these timeless structures with “random jungle gym equipment and expecting kids to get the same thrill and enjoyment that we got as kids. They won’t.”

# News-in-Brief: Whole Foods grand opening and more

**Whole Foods opens new location in LG:** On Apr. 15, Whole Foods Market opened at 15650 Los Gatos Boulevard, about half a mile south from the previous location that served the community for over 30 years. The spacious 43,130 square foot store – almost double the size of the former location – features more seating, a Whole Foods-only parking lot, a new coffee and juice bar, and an expanded prepared foods department. The store showcases 2,000 products from more than 250 California-based suppliers. The store’s use of electric van deliveries and food donations to West Valley Community Services support sustainability. On opening day, Whole Foods Market treated their customers with coffee and pastry samples from local vendors. This marked their expanded presence in the community. (Source: Whole Foods Market)

- **Tanya Chang**, Sports Editor

**Donald Trump fires SF Presidio Board:** President Donald Trump fired all six members of San Francisco’s Presidio Trust Board on Apr. 8. Former President Joe Biden previously hired these board members to manage the park. Trump’s action complements his February 2025 execu-

tive order to downsize various government entities. The government has not given the park a congressional appropriation since 2013 and has yet to appoint new board members to fill the openings. Referring to Trump’s actions, former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi commented, “It is disappointing that the President has chosen to fire an excellent Presidio Trust Board. San Francisco and indeed the Nation are indebted to the Board members for their leadership and their dedication to our beloved national park.” (Sources: NBC Bay Area, NY Times)

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

**LG holds public hearings for mosque:** The Los Gatos Planning Commission held two public hearings on the West Valley Muslim Association’s application to extend the Los Gatos mosque’s hours of operation for religious purposes. At both hearings, the council chamber was packed with attendees spilling outside of the building. Public comments ranged from residents and politicians to religious figures like Rabbi Rafi Ellenson of Congregation Shir Hadash. Rabbi Rafi spoke out in favor of the mosque’s request, insisting that the mosque

community deserve[s] a home to celebrate and practice Islam fully.” By the end, the commission had not reached a decision, and the hearing was continued to an unspecified future date to give time for the parties to explore mediation, which is not covered by the town budget.

(Sources: Los Gatan, Mercury News, SJ Spotlight)

- **Abby Coven**, News Editor



FULL HOUSE: Many LG residents attended the hearing regarding the mosque.

- U.S. Congress initiates a military draft
- Artemis II lands

# NATIONAL

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## The Selective Service System alters the U.S. draft

by **Kloe Adams**  
Games Creator

Beginning in December, the Selective Service System (SSS) will automatically register eligible young men for the military draft pool. This measure is a part of the National Defense Authorization Act, which the House and the Senate passed and President Donald Trump signed into law on Dec. 18, 2025, for the 2026 fiscal year. The SSS already requires men aged 18 to 26 to register for the selective service in case a draft is required. According to SSS's 2024 report, automatic registration is already in place in 26 states and territories. In late March, SSS proposed a rule to the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs to implement the practice nationwide.

Mandatory registration applies to green-card holders, refugees, asylum seekers, and undocumented men. Those on non-immigrant visas are exempt. In states that have not enacted automatic registration, men must register within 30 days of their 18th birthday. It is a felony not to register for the selective service, and avoidance can result in the loss of certain benefits, such as access to student and government loans as well as to federal jobs. Moreover, violating the Military Selective Service Act could lead to imprisonment for up to five years and a fine of up to 250,000 dollars.

SSS is an executive branch agency that is separate from the Defense Department. Since 1980, SSS has required men ages 18 to 25 who are eligible to register for the selective service. The last time



WE WANT YOU: Congress implements a military draft pool starting late 2026.

Congress instated a draft was during February of 1973 during the Vietnam War. Congress would have to approve a draft before one took place. Additionally, not all registered men would be enlisted; there is a lottery in which men's birthdays and numbers are randomly chosen. The SSS would induct people whose 20th birthdays fall in the year of the draft first, followed by the following age groups: 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 19, and those who are more than six months past their 18th birthday. Selected men would be allowed to request exemption or deferment; remaining men would then go through "physical, mental, and moral evaluation" according to the SSS. Democratic Representative Chrissy Houlahan, who sponsored the automatic selective service, announced: "Making registration automatic, not only saves taxpayer dollars by eliminating the need to advertise but finally ensures that young men are not unknowingly penalized."

The Trump administration noted that automatic registration has no connection to the ongoing war with Iran; however, they have declined to rule out the possibility of putting U.S. troops on the ground. Jeremy Kessler, a professor at Columbia Law School who has written extensively on the draft, believes that ground invasion would not be logistically doable without resorting to the draft. (Sources: CNN, NY Times)

## SCOTUS addresses MCTL

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

On Mar. 31, the Supreme Court heard a case involving resistance to Colorado's Minor Conversion Therapy Law (MCTL), which bans therapists from providing minors with conversion therapy counseling, a form of counseling typically aimed at changing someone's sexual or gender identity. Medical professionals have widely discredited conversion therapy as an ineffective and unethical practice, often citing that it leads to higher suicide and depression rates across the board.

The petitioner against the MCTL is Colorado therapist Kaley Chiles, who argued that her practice never begins with any predetermined approach to supporting her clients. Her methods, which the MCTL holds up as illegal acts of providing "conversion therapy," are through speech; thus, she insists, to limit them would be unconstitutional.

Chiles, who holds a master's degree in clinical mental health and a state license to practice as a therapist in Colorado, originally brought this challenge against MCTL; the U.S. District Court later

denied the lack of merits to her motion. After aggressive advocacy, Chiles achieved a Supreme Court review of the case in which the justices decided eight to one that conversion therapy in cases like Chiles can fall under "protected speech." The court also sent her case back to the lower court for reconsideration under a less strict standard of review.

Justice Elena Kagan, concurring with the majority, noted that if Colorado had enacted a neutral content-and-viewpoint law, the case would have been more complicated. This perspective contrasted with Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson's dissent, emphasizing that many states have banned conversion therapy, including speech-based therapy like Chiles's, regarding it as outdated based on prevailing medical opinion, harmful, and damaging to younger populations.

Concordant with Justice Jackson's argument, medical experts in many cases refer to conversion therapy as destructive, not achieving the proposed outcomes that stem from the discredited belief that LGBTQ+ identity is a mental illness requiring treatment. The American Psychological Association found that "youth whose parents attempted to change their sexual orientation at home and through therapists or religious leaders reported three times greater likelihood of high levels of depression, suicide attempts, lower educational attainment, lower income levels, and reduced life satisfaction in young adulthood."

Although the Supreme Court ruling does not have the final say on what will happen to MCTL and its limitations on talk therapy, its decision sets a precedent and could be cited in future cases. A decision like this weakens the strength of laws protecting queer youth in the United States and could carve a clear path toward wider legalization of conversion therapy practices nationwide.

(Sources: APA, BBC, NBC, The Trevor Project, Supreme Court)



ORDER ORDER: People protest conversion therapy rights.

## Trump's media sparks criticism

by **Julia Valencia**  
Opinion Editor

Since Pope Leo XIV's election in May of 2025, he has managed to remain neutral in his comments on the Trump administration, opting to make general statements advocating for the environment, migrants, and those dealing with financial difficulties rather than making direct statements condemning the actions of the United States government. On Apr. 10, Leo wrote that "God does not bless any conflict. Anyone who is a disciple of Christ, the Prince of Peace, is never on the side of those who once wielded the sword and today drop bombs." Many presumed that his comment was alluding to the war between the U.S. and Iran.

On Apr. 12, Trump posted an AI-generated image of himself to Truth Social, which depicted him as a Jesus-like figure healing a man. The Christian right almost immediately called out the president, with people like Riley Gaines, a conservative activist, questioning Trump's post, asking, "Does he actually like this?...A little humility would serve him well...God shall not be mocked." Trump, in an uncharacteristic act, took down the image shortly after it was posted, commenting that he thought the image was of him as a doctor, not as Jesus. The same day Trump removed the image, Gaines revoked her previous comment, saying that "I love the President and I'm so grateful he's in the Oval Office."

A day after President Trump called Pope Leo "WEAK on crime and terrible for Foreign Policy" on Truth Social, the pope spoke to reporters, saying that "I have no fear, neither of the Trump administration, nor of speaking out loudly about the message of the Gospel. And that's what I believe I am called here to do." When asked directly about Trump's post, Leo responded, saying "It's ironic - the name of the site itself. Say no more."

Leo garnered significant support from conservative Catholics across the U.S., many of whom

were displeased with his liberal predecessor, Pope Francis, whose actions they called ineffective and aggressive. Leo, who identifies as non-partisan and takes a centrist stance, has an 84% favorability rating among American Catholics, according to the Pew Research Center, many of whom quickly came to his defense after Trump's verbal attack. Rudy Gutierrez, a three-time Trump voter and member of the Catholic Church, said that the "attack on the pope for speaking out against war in Iran amid the threat of escalating violence went too far...As a Catholic, I take offense to that, and I am Republican."

Catholic Vice President, JD Vance, spoke to a conservative audience at the University of Georgia, criticizing Leo's open denunciation of the war. He commented, "Was God on the side of the Americans who liberated France from the Nazis? I certainly think the answer is yes." Leo told reporters that "the things that I say are certainly not meant as attacks on anyone, and the message of the Gospel is very clear: 'Blessed are the peacemakers.'" Though Leo spoke out against the war, this exchange cements his attempt at positioning himself as a politically neutral but morally vocal leader.

(Sources: CBS, PBS, Pew Research Center, NY Times)



POSE: President Trump speaks on the controversial image.

## NASA's Artemis II crew returns from mission to space

by **Gowri Sunil**  
News Editor

For the first time in 53 years, NASA safely sent humans to the moon and back to Earth. On Apr. 1, NASA's Artemis II mission launched for a ten-day journey with hopes to explore deep space conditions and record data about the moon's formation and evolution.

The crew was composed of the following members: Reid Wiseman, who was the mission's commander; Christina Koch and Jeremy Hansen, the two mission specialists; and Victor Glover, the pilot. Wiseman, Koch, and Glover are all NASA astronauts; Hansen comes from the Canadian Space Agency (CSA).

The spacecraft covered 252,756 miles in outer space and set a record for being the farthest any crew has been from Earth, breaking the previous record set by the Apollo 13 mission in 1970. The crew was also able to see the dark side of the moon, which is the only part that cannot be viewed from Earth. When orbiting this side of the moon, the crew experienced a 40-minute blackout during which their communication radio signals were blocked due to the moon's positioning. While orbiting, the astronauts took over 7,000 pictures of the moon, including its terrain, ancient lava flows, old basins, and much more, which helped scientists better understand the evolution of the moon.

Generally, re-entering the Earth's atmosphere is usually very dangerous as temperatures may reach up to 5,000 degrees Fahrenheit.



LIFT OFF: Artemis II prepares for its upcoming voyage out of Earth's perimeter.

On top of that, a crack formed on a part of the heat shield of the Orion capsule during uncrewed tests. Both of these concerns led NASA to make some adjustments in the re-entry path, allowing for a safer return.

In addition to providing photo data, the crew also helped test for human life in the deep sea environment, which is the unexplored area beyond the Moon. In the Orion spacecraft, the astronauts tested its life support systems and manual piloting, and they also ran experiments for the human body's response to the deep space environment to provide data for future longer missions. Commemorating years of international teamwork, NASA's Associate Administrator Amit Kshatriya declared that, "This moment belongs to the thousands of people across fourteen countries who built, tested, and trusted this vehicle. Their work protected four human lives traveling at 25,000 miles per hour and brought them safely back to Earth."

NASA has already begun planning its next two missions, Artemis III and IV, following the successful Artemis II mission. NASA aims to launch the upcoming missions in 2027 and 2028, respectively, and Artemis IV is expected to complete the first human landing on the moon since 1972. With the substantial information collected from the Artemis missions, NASA hopes to create a permanent base on the moon and support future Mars exploration.

(Sources: NASA, NBC News)

- U.S. forces recover pilots
- Hungary elects new PM

## U.S. military forces rescue F-15E fighter pilots from Iran

by Quinn Hathaway  
Media Production Editor

U.S. military forces rescued the second and final pilot of the F-15E Strike Eagle fighter jet on Apr. 5. Iranian forces shot down the fighter jet in combat over a remote Iranian mountain range, with the first pilot discovered only several days earlier on Apr. 3. Both pilots remain anonymous, with President Trump referring to the crew member as “a respected Colonel.”

The aircraft went down over a rugged section of southeastern Iran, with both flight members ejecting from the jet. U.S. military helicopters rescued the pilot later that same day, but did not yet recover the second personnel aboard, a weapons operator, on Apr. 3. The Iranian military, Iranian Revolutionary Guards, claimed to have taken out the jet, sending U.S. intelligence pictures of aircraft debris that appeared consistent with the description of the F-15E. The Iranian government then announced a 50,000-euro bounty for anyone who recovered the missing operator. President Trump said that “at [his] direction, the U.S. Military sent dozens of aircraft, armed with the most lethal weapons in the World, to retrieve him.” Trump elaborated that the arsenal and forces included over 150 aircraft, 64 of which were fighter jets.

The airman was armed with a handgun and beacon signal, though he refrained from using the latter for fear of alerting Iranian intelligence to his whereabouts. Trump reported that the CIA monitored the operator’s location 24 hours a day, while simultaneously spreading false information to Iran that the U.S. had found the missing member. The airman hid in a mountain crevice for the duration of his time



TAKEOFF: The two pilots flew in F-15E Strike Eagle fighter jets over Iran.

in the conflict zone, with the Trump administration confirming that he intermittently climbed the mountains in hopes of getting a signal through.

The rescue mission proved difficult, with two planes failing to take off due to the Iranian and U.S. military subsequently burning both crafts, as is standard military procedure with failed aircraft in enemy territory. Furthermore, Iranian forces reported the destruction of two U.S. C-130 transport planes and two Blackhawk helicopters, explaining that the conflict was due to “a deception and escape mission at an abandoned airport in southern Isfahan... [it] was completely foiled.”

Three U.S. military rescue planes finally recovered the missing operator in the late hours of Apr. 5, and the trio of planes flew back to Kuwait just before midnight, where the airman received immediate treatment for his injuries. President Trump posted on Truth Social with confirmation of the completed rescue mission: “My fellow Americans, over the past several hours, the United States Military pulled off one of the most daring Search and Rescue Operations in U.S. History... I am thrilled to let you know [he] is now SAFE and SOUND!” Further information regarding both the pilot and the weapons operator’s identities has not been released. (Sources: BBC, CBS, NBC)

## Military strikes in Nigeria

by Britt Melinauskas  
National Editor

On Apr. 11, a Nigerian Air Force operation aimed at jihadist militants reportedly struck a local market in northeastern Nigeria, killing more than 100 civilians and injuring many others, according to a civil rights group and local media. Incidents such as the airstrike are not unusual in Nigeria, where the military frequently carries out airstrikes against armed groups. According to an Associated Press tally of reported cases, these operations have resulted in the deaths of at least 500 civilians since 2017. Security experts attribute these tragedies to weaknesses in intelligence collection, as well as poor coordination between ground forces, air units, and other key factors.

The airstrike occurred near a large, remote market along the Borno-Yobe border, an area where Boko Haram fighters reside and visit to purchase



HIT: Military strikes hit along the Borno-Yobe border.

food and supplies. Abdulmumin Bulama, who works with a civilian security group supporting the Nigerian military in the northeast, said intelligence had indicated that Boko Haram militants were assembling close to the market and were allegedly preparing an attack on surrounding villages. He explained that the Air Force carried out the strike based on what was considered credible.

In a statement, the Yobe State Government confirmed that the military operation was aimed at a Boko Haram stronghold in the region. The Yobe State Emergency Management Agency acknowledged the incident and noted that it had led to casualties. The agency added that after the airstrike, they had deployed emergency response teams while urging residents to stay calm. Amnesty International Nigeria’s director, Isa Sanusi, told The Associated Press that the organization was in contact with local sources, hospitals, and officials responsible for casualty reports, as well as with victims and those on the ground.

Moreover, the Nigerian military described the operation as a successful strike against a “terrorist enclave and logistics hub.” The military claimed that several militants were killed as they moved on motorcycles.

Nigeria is Africa’s most populous nation and thus continues to face a complex security crisis, particularly in its northern regions, due to a long-running insurgency that persists alongside multiple armed groups involved in kidnappings for ransom. The main groups include Boko Haram and a breakaway group that joined with the Islamic State and is now called Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP). There is also another group linked to the Islamic State called Lakurawa, which is active in northwestern Nigeria near the border with Niger.

(Sources: BBC, NBC, Reuters, The Guardian)

## China fights desertification

by Annabelle Pan  
Graphics Editor

Over the past 80 years, 27.9% of the world’s land has suffered low precipitation and high aridity, fueling desert expansion and land degradation. Desertification most severely affects deserts and drylands in Africa and Asia, as some of the world’s largest deserts expand across these continents. To combat regional expansion, countries have recently explored government projects, like China and Africa’s “Great Green Belts,” and innovative designs, including a tumbleweed sower system.

The Chinese government has placed heavy emphasis on fighting desertification and environmental pollution across northern China. Their Three-North Shelterbelt Program (TNSP), nicknamed the “Great Green Wall,” aims to increase forest cover by almost 10% over 72 years by planting trees around the Gobi and Taklamakan Deserts. Chinese authorities reported that they finished planting a 1,900-mile-long belt of trees around the Taklamakan Desert, the world’s second-largest shifting desert. After the project’s completion, the desert will absorb more carbon than it releases and experiences more rainfall. However, although planted forests can help combat soil erosion and desertification, researchers fear that such projects can strain scarce water resources and limit ecosystem variation. The project plans to cover the northern section with solar panels before planting desertification control crops in the shade. The United Nations Environment Programme designated the Kubuqi Desert restoration project as a global model for desert containment. Northern African countries in the Sahel-Sahara region also implemented a “Great Green Wall” from west to east to stop the Sahara Desert’s expansion. The forest of drought-resistant trees, such

as acacias, spans 4,970 miles to combat droughts, food shortages, and decreasing natural resources. The project employs indigenous land techniques, not just simple tree-planting, to ensure durability. The ultimate goal is to restore 100 million acres of land by 2030 and absorb millions of tons of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.

Among the many climate-friendly design concepts of 2026, one of the most notable is the Wasteland Nomads: Bionic Tumbleweed Sower System by Yizhuo Guo. The design utilizes principles of passive robotics with no batteries or external power required, and the design is completely biodegradable. Guo, inspired by tumbleweeds, created the device to continuously roll with the desert wind, releasing seeds in favorable conditions. The device leaves no waste or remnants and boosts soil oxygen to combat desertification and aridification. Already, Guo’s design has won the 2025 European Product Design Award and earned recognitions from Chinese design institutions and the iF Design Award in Germany. As climate change continues to change the Earth’s landscape, projects like Guo’s tumbleweed design aim to support ecosystems and biomes in environmentally-friendly ways.

(Sources: ECoNews, FarmSahel, Newsweek, UN, World Economic Forum, Yanko Design)



BUILT: The Belt of Trees will help absorb more carbon.

## Hungary removes Orbán from office after 16 years

by Noah Gloege  
World Editor

The Hungarian government held its parliamentary election on Apr. 12 to select all 199 members of the National Assembly. It was the tenth parliamentary election and the highest-turnout election since their transition to democracy in 1990. The opposition, the Tisza Party, run by former Fidesz Member and European Parliament (MEP) member Péter Magyar, won the election in a landslide, defeating the Fidesz-Christian Democratic People’s Party (KDNP) government of Prime Minister Viktor Orbán and ending the 16-year Orbán era. Magyar won a two-thirds supermajority, the legislative threshold for amending the Constitution of Hungary.



DECISION: Hungary elects Magyar as new prime minister, defeating Orbán.

Orbán was the longest-serving prime minister in modern Hungarian history as the leader of the Christian nationalist and far-right party Fidesz, known for its authoritarianism and increasingly identified as illiberal. Fidesz is in alliance with the KDNP and is seeking a fifth consecutive term. Magyar is the leader of Tisza, a conservative, center-right party that ran on a pro-European, anti-corruption, centrist, and populist platform.

The only other party to cross the electoral threshold was the ultranationalist and far-right Our Homeland Movement, with László Toroczkai leading the group. Most of the other parties pulled out of the campaign to prevent Fidesz from taking advantage of vote-splitting. Reporters described it as the most important election in the European Union (EU) in 2026 and as a choice as to whether Hungary would continue to drift towards authoritarianism and Russia or change course towards democracy and the EU. Before the elections, both major parties accused each other of fraud. In the days leading up to the election, U.S. Vice President JD Vance visited the capital, Budapest, to voice his support for Prime Minister Orbán. To reinforce U.S. support, President Donald Trump sent a video endorsing the former prime minister. The Trump administration wanted a “like-minded” and nationalist ally in Europe.

Independent polling showed that Tisza had a clear lead, while pro-government pollsters projected a Fidesz win. Orbán conceded defeat on election night and congratulated Magyar, as did various international leaders. Magyar’s victory has also been viewed as a loss

for Russia under Vladimir Putin, for European and global far-right movements, and for the Trump administration.

Magyar has also voiced his displeasure at the Hungarian president, Tamas Sulyok, and hopes to remove him from office. The presidency in Hungary is the most sacred and ceremonial office, so removing Sulyok is a signal that Magyar hopes to topple Orbán’s old order.

According to Hungarian constitutional practice, the president is required to nominate the person most likely to command a majority in the National Assembly to form the incoming government. President Sulyok met with all three party leaders on Apr. 15 and announced he would propose Magyar as prime minister when the legislature meets. (Sources: BBC, CNN, NY Times, Reuters, Politico)



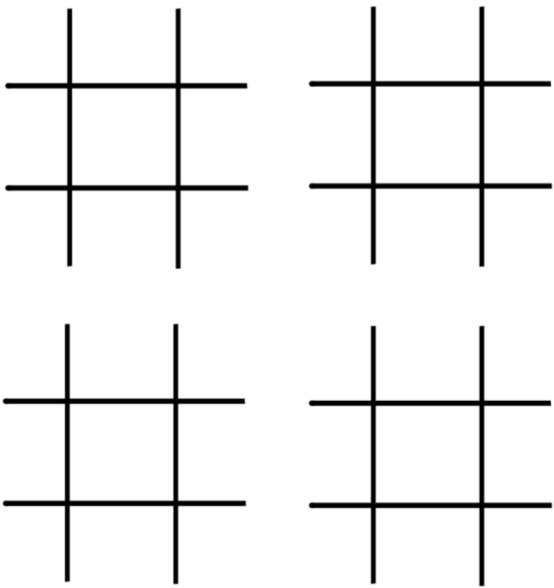
LIGHT UP: The Hungarian parliament building shines along the Danube.

- Grab a friend and play Connect Four
- Place the dominos correctly in Pips

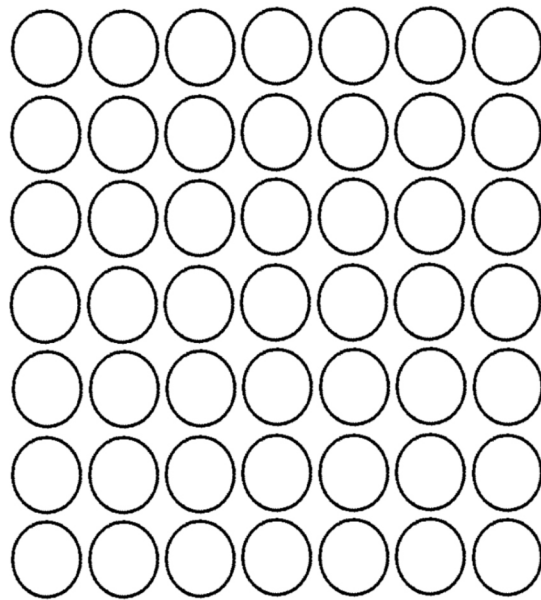
# GAMES

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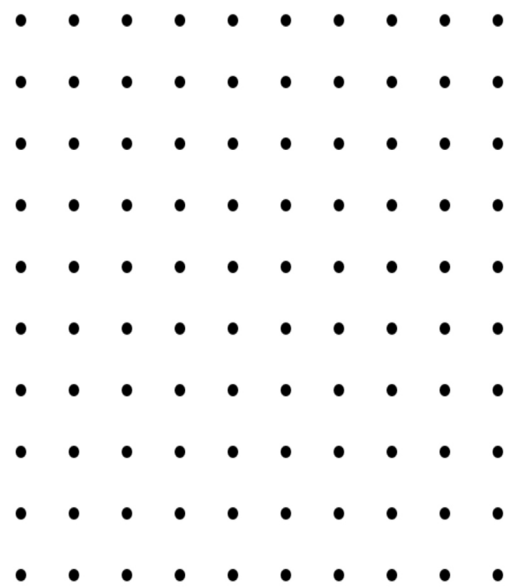
## TIC TAC TOE



## Connect Four

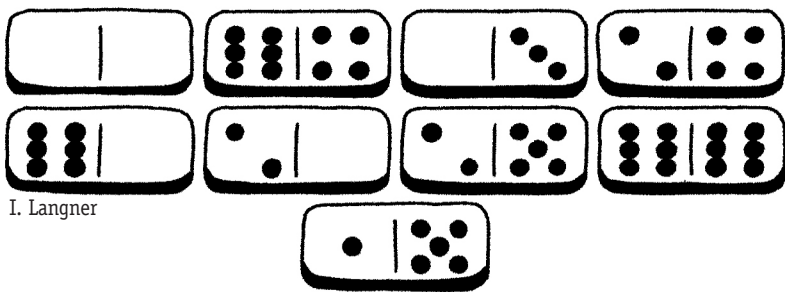
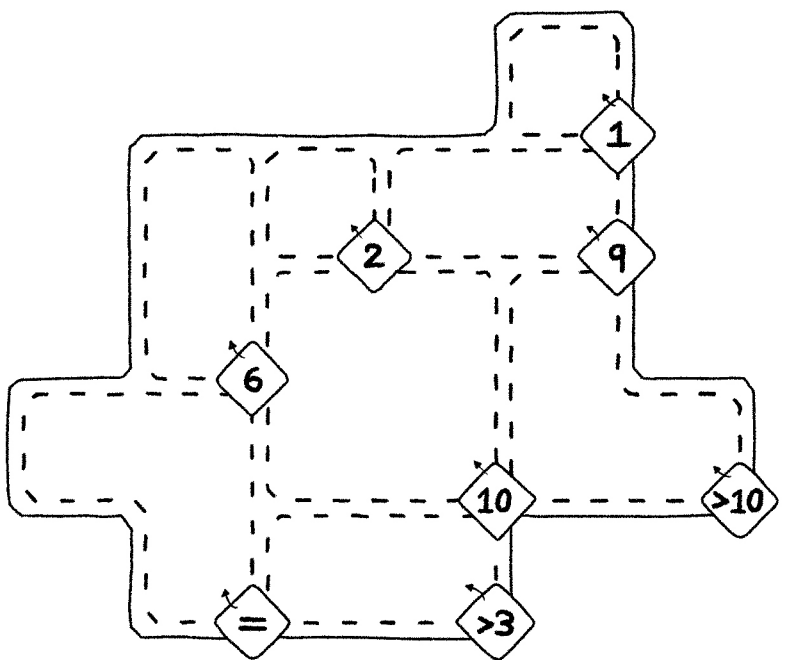


## DOTS AND BOXES



K. Adams

## PIPS



I. Langner

## Character Mashup



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A. Pan

1	2		3	4	5
6		7		8	
9			10		
11					
	12				
13				14	

## CROSSWORD

Across:

- Chronic illness that Selma Blair has (abbreviated)
- Agency created by Theodore Roosevelt that regulates medicine
- Spring's second month (abbreviated)
- Android and Windows are two examples (abbreviated)
- Expansion over time
- 4 x 20
- Never \_\_\_\_ (Tobias from Arrested Development)
- 20 years old, for example
- Alfred \_\_ Buttler (Lego Batman's favorite password)

Down:

- Gandalf and Merlin are two
- A flower's favorite season
- Failing grade
- Flecked or speckled
- How one's knees might get without moisturizer
- Sneaky Dungeons and Dragons class
- Division of the Department of Labor that maintains labor laws
- Perfect grade



RULES



SOLUTIONS

S. Muthukrishnan

# EDITORIAL

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- Los Gatans should utilize public nature spaces

## The LGHS community must appreciate local green areas

by **Siyona Singhal, Arnav Singhal, and Megan Saul**  
*Humor Editor, Sports Editor, and Editor-in-Chief*

As summer approaches and school begins to wrap up, it is natural for students to start making summer plans. Many set hopeful goals that include productivity, socializing, and endless adventures. However, as weeks pass, these ambitions fade away and often turn into aimless scrolling. Instead of truly making the best of their break, students end up indoors on their beds every day. This pattern leaves students feeling unfulfilled, disconnected, and disappointed. This summer, instead of falling into that cycle, LGHS students and families should make a conscious effort to appreciate the vast variety of green spaces that Los Gatos has to offer.

Nestled in the foothills of the Santa Cruz Mountains, Los Gatos has a diverse collection of underrecognized green spaces. Within the town's fourteen square-mile area and the Santa Cruz Mountain Range are 3,000 acres of unprotected open space, along with easy access to over 20 public parks. However, residents leave the majority of these areas unused, as they are often unaware of what the parks have to offer. While downtown Los Gatos is a great place to spend time, people often overlook the natural areas right next to it. Just 500 meters away from the iconic North Santa Cruz Avenue lies Bachman Park, home to both a basketball court for teenagers to hang out and a sand pit for their younger brothers and sisters to play in. East Los Gatos offers Live Oak Manor Park, which includes hilly open space to play with pets and an impressive play structure.

Of course, visiting parks offers a lot more than entertainment. An Assembly Civic Engagement Survey with a sample size of over 5,000 individuals in 26 U.S. communities shows that access to nearby parks is strongly linked to increased civic engage-

ment and improved physical and mental health outcomes across communities. Los Gatos High School junior and youth commissioner **Saketh Chinnakotla** reflected upon what he has gained from being on the commission: "Being a liaison for the Parks and Public Works Commission showed me that parks aren't merely plots of grass and playgrounds, but spaces where people can connect with their community

Supporting hiking trails is essential to making sure the natural spaces are well-maintained and stay available to everyone. With drastic budget cuts for National Park services, it is becoming increasingly difficult for park rangers to maintain trails, which is why

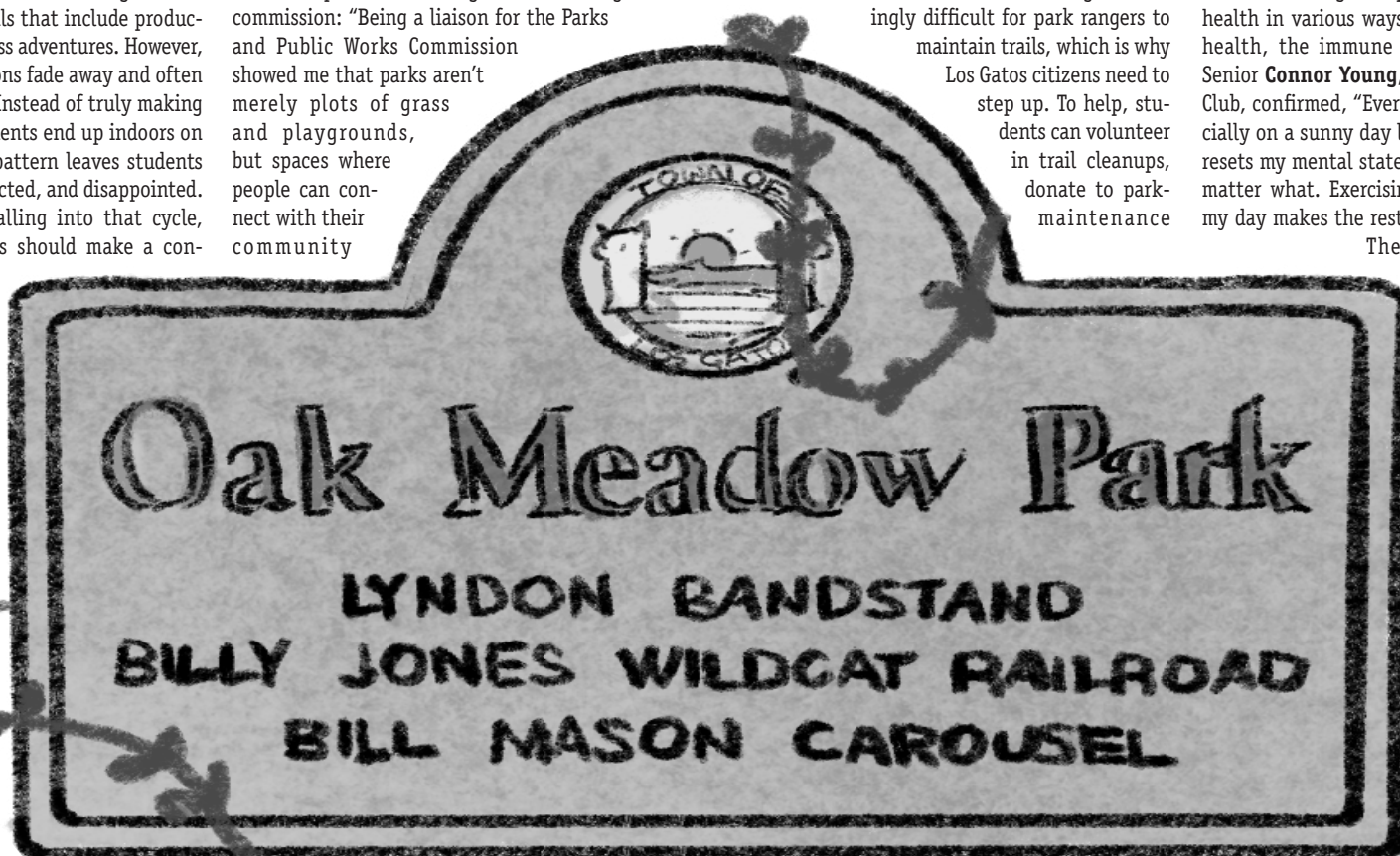
Los Gatos citizens need to step up. To help, students can volunteer in trail cleanups, donate to park-maintenance

cannot have one without the other; to enjoy parks and trails, people must contribute to their upkeep.

There are many personal benefits to spending time outside in green spaces. It improves individuals' health in various ways, including boosting mental health, the immune system, and heart health. Senior **Connor Young**, the president of the Biking Club, confirmed, "Every time I go out biking, especially on a sunny day like today, it just completely resets my mental state. It always brings me joy, no matter what. Exercising in the beginning part of my day makes the rest of my day so much better."

The American Psychological Association shared an insightful 2019 review by the University of Chicago: "Green spaces near schools promote cognitive development in children and green views near children's homes promote self-control behaviors." As April, Stress Awareness Month, is often a demanding time for students, it is essential for students to increase their usage of green spaces and Los Gatos trails.

Los Gatos residents should utilize and appreciate the town's resources and enjoy the many parks and trails available. If you're interested in participating in events related to green spaces, Los Gatos offers an abundance of opportunities for students and residents to help preserve the town's outdoors as well as enjoy it. The Los Gatos Parks & Public Works Department conducts events to clean up trails and plant new seeds throughout the town. These events include Adopt-a-Trail, Adopt-a-Planter, and Adopt-a-Highway Clean Up Projects. Los Gatos is making an effort to celebrate nature through its Spring into Green event at the Town Plaza Park on Apr. 26. Consider getting involved in these kinds of events that celebrate LG's green spaces, especially during the warmer months. (Sources: AllTrails, American Psychological Association, UCLA Health)



F. Banno

and step away from the stresses of everyday life." Ultimately, parks in Los Gatos are a lot more than green spaces; they are opportunities for residents to engage with their surroundings.

In addition, Los Gatos and its surrounding areas are home to an extensive network of accessible and beautiful hiking trails. They are an ideal way to get out of the house, spend time outdoors, and be active. Locally, some popular trails are the Kennedy Trail, the Jones Trail, the Los Gatos Creek Trail, and the Lexington Reservoir Trail. However, these are only a few of the many free and nearby trails. The AllTrails website or app is an excellent resource to find more trails that fit hikers' skillset, preferences, and location. It has maps of trails, reviews, ratings, distance, elevation gain, and so much more.

agencies, and practice Leave No Trace principles. Make sure to hold onto trash, stay on the path, and be responsible when around wildlife. Advocating for awareness of natural spaces and spreading the word about their value helps preserve these areas. For students who regularly use these trails, protecting them is especially important. Certified outdoorsman and LGHS senior **Patrick Hayes** loves hiking and backpacking. Locally, his favorite trail is the Los Gatos Creek Trail and the two-day hike up Mount Umunhum. To help support hiking trails, Hayes suggests that students volunteer for the Santa Cruz Mountain Trail Stewardship and be conscious about picking up trash while hiking. Appreciating green spaces doesn't just mean using them; it also entails the responsibility of protecting these areas. You



### APRIL/MAY

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
26	27	28 Varsity Track and Field De Anza Trials	29 Girls' Softball vs. Milpitas	30 JV Track and Field De Anza Trials	1 Boys' Baseball vs. Santa Clara	2
3	4 AP Testing Begins Girls' Varsity Lacrosse Senior Night	5 Boys' Lacrosse vs. Palo Alto	6 Girls' Softball vs. Saratoga	7 Boys' Baseball vs. Los Altos	8 Girls' Softball vs. Los Altos	9 Senior Prom
10	11 Senior Athletic Signing Celebration	12 Boys' Varsity Lacrosse CCS Quarterfinals	13 Boys' Baseball vs. Palo Alto	14 Boys' Varsity Lacrosse CCS Semifinals	15 AP Testing Ends	16
17	18	19	20	21 Fractured Follies	22 Freshman Fun Run Fractured Follies	23 Varsity Track and Field CCS Finals
24	25 Memorial Day	26 Canine Companions @ Lunch	27	28	29 Track and Field CIF State Championships	30 Track and Field CIF State Championships



4/24/26

A. Pan

## EL GATO

Los Gatos High School  
Los Gatos, CA 95030

### Editors-in-Chief

Sam Gruetter  
Nelson Kramer  
Megan Saul  
Hayley Strahs

20 High School Court  
(408) 354-2730

### Advisor

Paris DeSoto  
pdesoto@lgsuhsd.org

### News Editors

Abby Coven  
Gowri Sunil

### Games Creator

Kloe Adams

### Media Editors

Quinn Hathaway  
Lila Zamansky

### Opinion Editors

Julia Valencia  
Tanvi Ambekar

### National and World Editors

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Noah Gloege

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### Public Relations Managers

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# OPINION

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## Supreme Court judges need to have term limits

by Sahil Muthukrishnan  
Culture Editor



The United States Supreme Court is the country's highest judicial body and retains the power to check both the Executive and Legislative branches. With such a powerful entity, partisan bias and ethical compromise must be eliminated. One way the Founding Fathers attempted to ensure this was by giving justices lifetime terms. This was supposed to ensure that justices did not have to cater to any particular party or body to get reelected. While this worked for a time, it has backfired in recent years. The government should introduce term limits of eight to ten years for Supreme Court justices to ensure ethical conduct, prevent partisan or ideological bias, and curb extremism.

With their positions enshrined for life, justices may engage in questionable activities without repercussions, as Justice Clarence Thomas exemplifies. He has accepted extravagant gifts and amenities from a variety of conservative donors, like Harlan Crow. Additionally, he refused to recuse himself in a Jan. 6, 2021, case that involved his wife directly. Unfortunately, Thomas is not the only justice with such ethically ambiguous conduct; Justice

Samuel Alito also received backlash for not recusing himself from Jan. 6, 2021, cases after flying flags associated with the insurrection at his residence. While at one time, the precedent of recusing oneself when ethically compromised was enough to keep the court accountable, it is clear that this is not sufficient to ensure a fair judicial branch.

The lack of term limits also breeds extremism and partisan bias. With nine justices on the court, an odd number, and a majority rule system, each party only needs five representatives to achieve their goals. This would function smoothly if those stand-ins were more temporary, but with our system, once a justice is sworn in, they serve for life. This encourages whichever party is in power at the time of a justice's death to hastily swear in a candidate who aligns with their dogmatic compass. The surrogate chosen is often extreme in either direction to ensure that either party will have a reliable vote for what is often decades. This resulted in our current court having a 6-3 conservative majority, making it one of the most ideologically polarized courts in history. A Gallup poll found that

43% of Americans feel the court is "too conservative," with 69% of participants favoring term limits in a study from the Annenberg Public Policy Center. With such a powerful body, moderation is the best way to ensure fair rulings.

We need a better way of minimizing instances of misconduct, and term limits would do just that. Justices do not need to run for election, so they do not have to cater to any particular party, and dedicated terms would continue that objectivity. If the government implemented eight to ten years for each justice, not only would the window for misconduct shrink, but there would be less pressure for an administration to insert the most extreme ideologue they can find to extend their side's power for generations. With no possibility of extending their service, justices would retain their own will to make decisions, not appealing to any particular community or special interest group for funding or votes.

In a time when the nation continues to be deeply divided, we need a fair, bipartisan, and rational Supreme Court. Introducing term limits for justices is the best solution to achieving these goals.

(Sources: Alliance for Justice, Gallup, University of Pennsylvania)



## Plea bargaining must end

by Abby Coven  
News Editor



Millions of criminal cases begin or end with the defendant pleading guilty in exchange for a lighter sentence, reduced charges, and less uncertainty. Prosecutors routinely make

plea deals with defendants to manage overwhelming caseloads and ensure convictions. The resulting modern plea bargaining system is unconstitutional and shortcuts true justice. State legislative bodies and Congress have a responsibility to increase resources to the criminal justice system to stop plea bargaining and safeguard constitutional integrity for those accused of crimes.

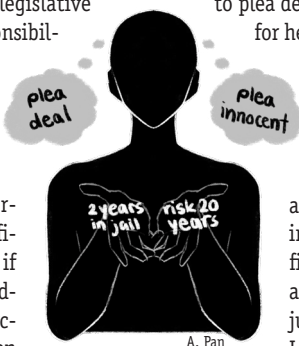
Moreover, "trial penalty" is a coercive way prosecutors threaten significantly harsher and longer sentences if defendants invoke their Sixth Amendment right to a jury trial, often forcing defendants to plead guilty even if they are innocent. In addition to violating the Fifth Amendment right to avoid self-incrimination, defendants who agree to plea agreements forego their right to confront their accusers and challenge evidence. Without a trial, cases with weak evidence or police misconduct proceed without holding law enforcement accountable.

Over 97% of criminal cases in the federal courts end in plea bargains, and the rates are similarly high in state courts. Gradually, policies have made plea bargaining exponentially easier for prosecutors and a better option for defendants. In 1978, the Supreme

Court ruled the "trial penalty" practice of threatening drastically higher sentences was constitutional in *Bordenkircher v. Hayes*. Prosecutors also routinely overcharge defendants with criminal violations, ensuring that going to trial becomes too risky, leading defendants to accept lower, negotiated charges. Famously, in 2008, Jeffrey Epstein's charges for sex trafficking could have led to a life sentence. After working out a plea deal, he pleaded guilty, reducing his sentence to 13 months in prison with work release, which federal officials later considered as a failure in sentencing. Moreover, innocent people are at serious risk of serving time in prison by agreeing to plea deals. After almost 20 years of fighting for her innocence, Angela Garcia served up to 17 years in prison for an arson charge that was later disproven.

Furthermore, this broken plea bargaining system seriously disadvantages defendants who cannot afford legal defense and bail, forcing them to make compromises for financial reasons. Racial disparities are rampant throughout the criminal justice system, especially for Black and Latino individuals, who are far more likely to plead guilty to crimes they did not commit for a lesser sentence. Plea deals are negotiated in private, which can lead to inconsistent outcomes for people accused of the same crimes and further drive racial bias.

While plea bargaining does considerably accelerate the often long judicial process, it undermines and discards crucial aspects of a fair trial. The plea bargaining system is leaving massive gaps in justice that have the potential to alter the lives of innocent people and their families. (Sources: ABA, Brookings, NPR)



A. Pan

## Buy more local produce

by Jane Wilde  
Humor Editor



As of 2026, Americans have sprayed more than 2.4 billion pounds of glyphosate on produce in the past decade. This chemical is proven to be directly linked

to the rise of autoimmune diseases and the farmer debt crisis. It's now more important than ever to support local farmers' markets and eliminate laws that increase the production of the lethal pesticide.

Behind the convenience of store-bought, non-organic foods is an agricultural system that heavily relies on poisonous chemicals to function. After the Second World War, a new kind of farming emerged, using chemicals directly derived from Nazi Germany's missiles. Those very chemicals are being sprayed on 75% percent of today's non-organic produce as a cost-efficient way to kill insects.

These pesticides are wildly dangerous for a multitude of reasons, one of the most prominent being the risk of autoimmune disease. Glyphosate increases the risk of developing multiple sclerosis, celiac disease, and a plethora of other neurological disorders. Roy Thompson, a South Dakotan man in his early thirties healed his Crohn's disease by eating only regeneratively sourced food, eliminating prescription medications from his life. He remarked, "I realized that soil

health is where human health begins—so there's a disconnect between health and the way we're growing our food."

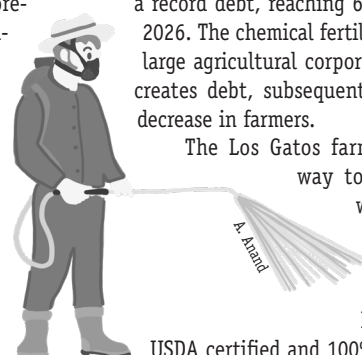
Trump recently signed the Defense Production Act that works directly against the interest of American's health. The act increases the overall production of glyphosate and further subsidizes growers, a move that perpetuates this toxic cycle. This is a tragedy for farmers and U.S. citizens alike and diminishes the trust people have in their food sources.

In addition to the detrimental effects on human health, the chemical demand is causing U.S. farmers to deal with severe financial and health struggles. According to the USDA, they are facing a record debt, reaching 624.7 billion dollars as of 2026. The chemical fertilizer and input costs that large agricultural corporations force them to use creates debt, subsequently causing a significant decrease in farmers.

The Los Gatos farmers' market is a great way to support local farmers while reducing the risk of developing health issues and consuming harmful chemicals. Nearly every vendor is

USDA certified and 100% organic. The Los Gatos community must support our local farmers during this time as it not only benefits them, but us as well.

Pesticides are ruining the livelihood of Americans and causing farmers to go into severe debt. We must resist laws that promote this corruption. In order to reduce exposure to synthetic pesticides and lower the likelihood of developing an autoimmune disease, purchasing food locally is imperative. (Sources: Common Ground, Environmental Sciences Europe, EWG, FarmAid, NIH, WHO)



## Sunil calls for strict policies regarding robotaxis

by Gowri Sunil  
News Editor



With their marketed efficiency, robotaxis have quickly taken over the commuting world. Despite the hidden risks, these vehicles now replace a typical drive that once required a licensed individual. Policymakers must caution against the use of robotaxis in order to protect the public's safety and privacy while preventing

overreliance on the technology. With any new mode of transportation, the biggest concern is safety. While things like driver's education and handbooks set guidelines, driving requires responses to unpredictable conditions. Unlike humans, robotaxis rely on a significant amount of pre-programmed data to assess situations. The APM Research Lab noted, "If a vehicle's onboard artificial intelligence encounters an unfamiliar situation, it will contact a human remote operator... but these human operators do not have the ability to take control of the vehicle." This limitation is critical, as without human intuition, robotaxis struggle to navigate complicated environments including construction zones and harsh weather.

Beyond its safety risks, robotaxis also pose a new form of surveillance. Already, websites and social media collect people's data; robotaxis add to invasion of privacy since they rely on

cameras and tracking systems to operate. The Electronic Frontier Foundation warned that this creates "the possibility for people's movements to be tracked, aggregated, and retained by companies, law enforcement, or bad actors — including vendor employees." They added that "the sheer mass of this information poses a potential threat to civil liberties and privacy for pedestrians, commuters, and any other people that rely on public roads and walkways in cities." People consider cars private spaces, yet robotaxis threaten this comfort as they monitor daily commutes with no clear guidelines.

In addition, the adoption of robotaxis results in a decline of essential human skills. Currently, Artificial Intelligence and navigation tools like GPS have considerably reduced human ability to function autonomously. However, with driving, the situation is much more dire because it requires judgment and responsibility, which technology cannot easily replace. With growing dependence

on robotaxis, driver's licenses and permit tests could become useless and forgotten, leaving individuals unable to adapt when robotaxis fail.

While some may argue that robotaxis are not much different from automated trains, this assumption overlooks the key differences between controlled and unpredictable environments. Furthermore, APM Research reported that for every million miles Waymo, Google's robotaxis, travelled, they had around 4.5 crashes. This is well over the 1.94 crashes per million miles for human drivers, though the company argues it is because of underreported human crashes. Despite the convenience

of robotaxis, society must not overlook their risks to safety and privacy. Roads are nowhere near a controlled system, and technology designed for predictable scenarios should not handle them. Until policymakers fully address these issues, society must approach robotaxis with caution and clear limits. (Sources: APM Research, EFF, TechExplore)



A. Pan

# Invest in space technology

by Tanya Chang  
Sports Editor



At first, it may seem like government funding for space exploration is unnecessary as we face problems like climate change, poverty, and economic instability.

However, investing in space is not a distraction from these problems, but rather one of the most powerful tools for humanity. The government should continue and expand funding for space exploration because it will help advance scientific progress and maintain global stability.

One of the biggest benefits of funding space exploration is the economic impact. The investments provided for these space programs do not disappear with unnecessary missions; rather, they circle back to our industries and communities.

According to the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), the agency produced more than 75 billion dollars in 2023, creating thousands of jobs across the United States. Aerospace requires highly skilled workers — engineers, manufacturers, software developers, and educators — creating multiple jobs that reach beyond the launch site. Instead of wasting public resources, space exploration can support a strong economy by encouraging employment and innovation in these fields.

Second, space exploration produces technologies that can be used to improve our daily lives. NASA's technology-transfer program has led to advances in medical devices,

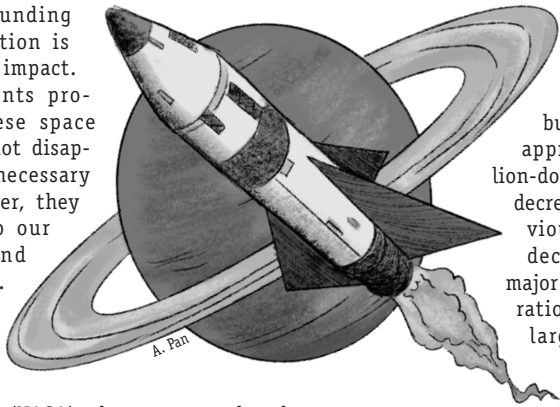
environmental monitoring systems, water purification technologies, and communication satellites. Additionally, a lot of the tools that are commonly used today exist because of research that was originally designed for space missions. Government investments allow scientists and engineers to develop technologies that private companies adopt for public use, benefiting society beyond the space industry.

Despite these advantages, critics argue that government funding replaces the urgency to focus on social needs. Costs may pose a threat during times of economic instability, but recent decisions suggest long-term investment has value. Recent political actions demonstrate the significance of govern-

ment funding. In early 2026, Congress rejected proposed 24% cuts to NASA's budget and instead approved a 24.4 billion-dollar budget, a 1.7% decrease from the previous budget. These decisions protected major science and exploration programs from large reductions in funding the White House initially proposed.

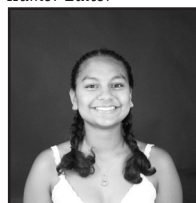
This reveals bipartisan recognition that space exploration remains a national priority rather than being a wasteful spending source.

Funding space exploration is not about neglecting problems on Earth, but rather making it a better place. Government investments for space technology help produce jobs, encourage discovery, and provide support for humanity to face future challenges. Choosing to explore the universe creates a better future for everyone. (Sources: NASA, Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation)



# Singhal argues for USAID

by Siyona Singhal  
Humor Editor



Since the very first day of his second term, President Donald Trump has been making decisions that greatly impact global humanitarian efforts. One of these decisions include dissolving the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). He issued this executive order on Jan. 20, 2025, and by Feb. 3, 2025, the USAID building in Washington, D.C. was closed. The U.S. government needs to reinstate USAID to fulfill the U.S.'s moral duty to support our allies and strengthen international relations.

USAID provided valuable humanitarian help. From 2002 to 2021, global aid reduced child mortality by 39% for kids under five. It also contributed to mortality rate declines from communicable diseases, including a 70% drop in HIV/AIDS and a 56% drop in malaria. Researchers also found that deaths from nutritional deficiencies were reduced by 56%. Clearly, the U.S.-funded global aid was incredibly valuable to developing and struggling countries. Without external aid, poverty-stricken areas are already seeing significant impacts.

The Center for Global Development's analysis of the USAID cuts determined that the decline in current spending may have led to between 500,000 and 1 million more lives lost in 2025 compared to previous years. The decline in future spending is

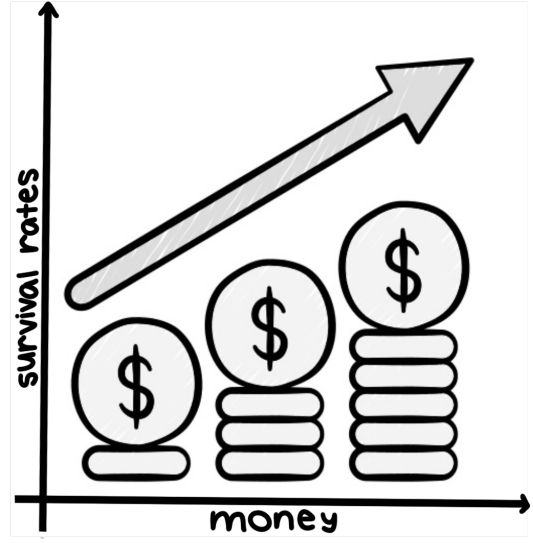
projected to lead to 670,000 to 1.6 million more deaths annually. In addition, a study by The Lancet Medical Journal predicts that the global aid cuts could lead to at least 9.4 million additional deaths by 2030. About 2.5 million of those deaths are projected to be children under the age of five. These numbers represent a terrifying and preventable loss of human life. Countries around the world rely on American foreign aid to combat disease, hunger, and poverty. Without this support, already vulnerable populations face worsening mortality rates and collapsing healthcare systems. The U.S. cannot ignore the consequences of withdrawing assistance.

Further, reinstating USAID benefits Americans as well. Cutting foreign aid sets an "America first" ideology, which reflects poorly on American international relationships. This mindset has also led to the U.S.

administration disregarding treaties with Greenland, launching military strikes, and continuing to harm relationships with other countries. USAID is a symbol of what America strives to be and the world it aims to create. Trump's actions have painted America as an erratic adversary rather than a stable ally.

People argue that USAID takes too much federal funding, yet foreign aid only makes up about 1% of the federal budget. The answer is clear: the government must reinstate USAID, especially in a time

when countries are war-torn and struggling. By cutting USAID, America has caused a vast increase in international mortality rates and sent the message that America only cares about itself. Reinstating USAID represents a reinstatement of responsibility, moral accountability, and a move towards saving millions of lives. The U.S government needs to take action, and soon. (Sources: CNN, KFF, NY Times)



# Colleges need to better enforce rules banning hazing

by Advika Anand  
Graphics Editor



Hazing is commonly known as any activity that is conditioned upon recruitment, admission, affiliation, or continued participation in a group and humiliates, degrades, abuses, or endangers someone, regardless of consent or willingness

to participate. Every year, college students join teams, clubs, and organizations hoping to find a place to belong on campus, only to be met with humiliation and coercion disguised as bonding. Because of this, colleges must establish and enforce stricter regulations to ensure that all organizations on campus refrain from excessively dangerous hazing, including but not limited to physical assault, forced consumption, kidnapping or abandonment, sexual acts, and other illegal activities.

Since 1954, there has been at least one hazing death per year in U.S. colleges and secondary schools. Although many colleges have preexisting rules that prohibit hazing, administrators often poorly enforce these policies or ignore

them altogether. In many cases, organizations operate under the assumption that their traditions will go unnoticed as long as they are discreet. New members may feel pressured to remain silent because they fear losing their place in the group, and as a result, hazing

can persist. Moreover, hazing is a direct result of the power imbalance in which new members are required to listen to and follow the directions of older members with authority. According to the Hazing Prevention Network, 55% of college students involved in fraternities, sororities, and other student organizations experienced hazing, but only one in ten students labeled it as hazing, demonstrating the normalization of indoctrination culture. Even when it is prominent in college, students are being trained not to speak up about these issues, further perpetuating their consequences.

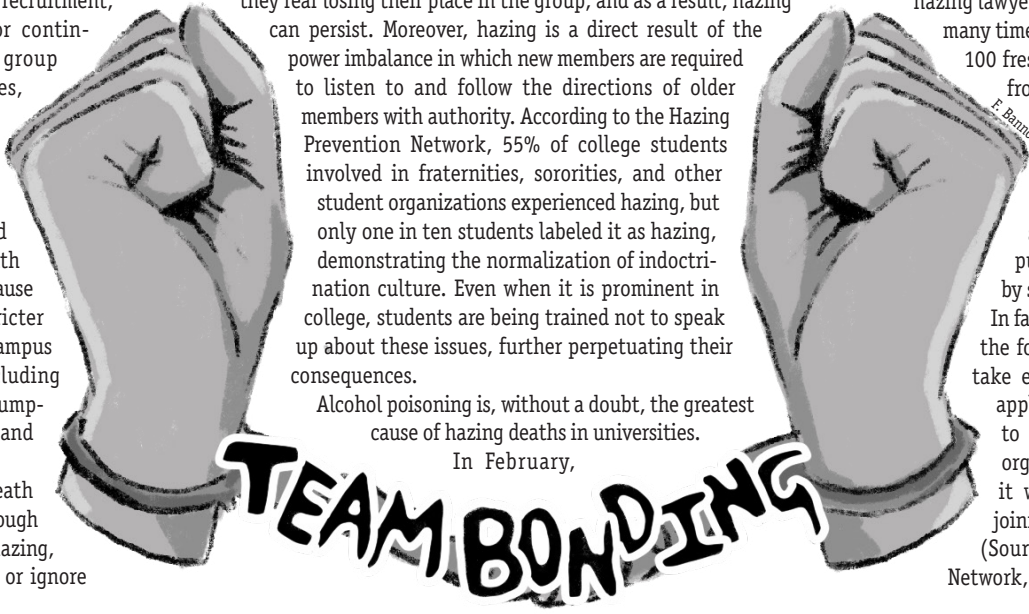
Alcohol poisoning is, without a doubt, the greatest cause of hazing deaths in universities.

In February,

authorities arrested three Delta Tau Delta leaders at Northern Arizona University following the death of an 18-year-old pledge who attended a Friday night rush party. David Bianchi, America's leading fraternity hazing lawyer, said, "It just is such a shame. I have seen this so many times, I can't even tell you... Since the year 2000, over 100 freshman males have died around the United States from fraternity hazing."

Hazing is entirely preventable, and colleges must take more action to ensure that students are engaging in safe, healthy activities outside of class. Depending on the severity of the hazing act, schools must properly punish the students in charge of the organizations by suspension, expulsion, or even police involvement. In fact, Louisiana lawmakers have been taking action in the form of House Bill 636, which, if approved, would take effect for the 2027-2028 school year. It would apply not only to fraternities and sororities, but also to sports teams, clubs, bands, and other student organizations. If more states enacted similar laws, it would greatly increase students' safety when joining school organizations.

(Sources: CU Boulder, Fox News, Hazing Prevention Network, KTAL News)



# Littfin highlights the disadvantages of toxic college pressure

by Kat Littfin  
Editorial Editor



Although summer is approaching, college tension is ever-present in each high school community. Whether it is incoming sophomores deciding whether to take AP courses, soon-to-be seniors stressing about essays and applications, or upcoming graduates solidifying their plans for the coming years, stress about college reverberates across all grades. While this tension is inevitable, it is also largely destructive, as it often fosters academic dishonesty, harmful comparisons, and prevents students from pursuing genuine passions that can eventually lead to future success. Therefore, LGHS's administration and students should take further steps to reduce college stress and advocate for post-high school plans that do not follow the traditional college path.

When students are only motivated to improve their college resumes, they are often more inclined to cheat. Senior Megan Lu commented on this issue, stating that college pressure causes some other students to be deceitful so that "even if you work harder and have more of a moral high ground, you may not have as good of results." An emphasis on solely getting into a good college encourages this

kind of dishonesty in the classroom. Ultimately, this single-minded strategy rarely benefits students, as they may struggle to keep up with their workload in college, even if they attend their dream school. Senior Anya Chauhan, who plans to attend Harvard next year, had a different mindset compared to many students regarding admissions: "College was never the end goal, more like a stepping stone for my future goals, so even if I didn't get into a so-called 'top' university, I wouldn't ever think that I wasted my time or effort."

Chauhan added that when she toured Harvard over the summer, the tour guide emphasized that "the less you try to get in [to Harvard], the more likely you are to get in" and encouraged students to instead "pursue [their] passions and make an impact on the people around you." The top schools in the country receive thousands of over-qualified app-

lications with straight As and impressive extracurriculars; authenticity and tangible impact make an individual stand out, not stats.

Understandably, the high school administration emphasizes post-secondary education; however, there is an opportunity to advertise and normalize these other choices. According to Fortune, while white-collar tech employees have been laid off in larger numbers in recent years, skilled trades workers are in demand and can often make six figures as a starting salary. Senior Sophia Bambas is pursuing an alternative route, hoping to join a workers' union while attending community college at De Anza. She then plans to attend a university while majoring in Construction Management. Bambas described first learning about this opportunity at a construction camp: "Usually I would think 'I have to do this for college,' but this camp showed me there were other options, which made me rethink my future." Although LGHS has programs that offer students an introduction to the technical field, publicizing opportunities like these more widely to students could foster genuine passion and set up more students for a more expansive and inclusive definition of success. (Source: Fortune)



- Puth drops captivating new album
- Project Hail Mary hits the theatres

# CULTURE

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## Rising artist Guitarricadela Fuente captures attention

by Claudia Casal Montserrat  
People Editor

Up and coming indie singer-songwriter Guitarricadela Fuente continues the global tour of his critically acclaimed album Spanish Leather. Released in May of 2025, his sophomore album, has further defined his music.

The Spanish artist began his career with the single Guantanamera. This is Guitarricadela Fuente's melancholic interpretation of the Cuban folk song of the same name, focusing on the sorrow of losing something dear. The song was featured in the Netflix drama, Elite, during a dramatic breakup scene.

Guitarricadela Fuente stepped into the spotlight with his feature on Natalie Lacunza's most well-known song, Nana Triste, an acoustic folk ballad. The song's title means "sad lullaby," and it explores this through the painful aftermath of heartbreak, mentioning building castles with salty tears, pleas for peace, and war. Following the release of this collaboration, Guitarricadela Fuente also put out Agua y Mezcal, a folk-pop single about finding peace in love and healing old wounds. He sings of warming the soul with water and mezcal, falling in love

again, and the mix of cultures that is now Spain. Finally, the Spaniard released his first complete album, La Cantera, in 2022. In this acoustic work, he explores his rural Spanish roots and nostalgia by meshing the traditional folk songs of his hometown with modern production and sounds, illustrating his transition from rural to urban life.

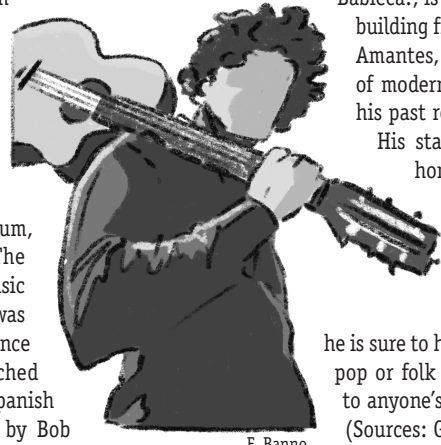
These past three years have been instrumental in his career. After meeting and befriending the electro-pop artist Troye Sivan, Guitarricadela Fuente was the only feature on Sivan's 2023 album, Something to Give to Each Other. The release of In My Room brought his music to an English-speaking audience and was the catalyst for greater recognition. Since then, Guitarricadela Fuente has launched a tour following his second album, Spanish Leather. The album's title is inspired by Bob

Dylan, Boots of Spanish Leather, and continues Guitarricadela Fuente's balance between tradition and modernity. This album shifts towards Spanish pop as he explores his sexuality more openly. One of the songs, Babieca!, is reminiscent of the intensity of summer and nightlife, building from a shy opening into a chant-heavy anthem. Futuros Amantes, as its name implies, captures the fast-paced nature of modern romance and the desire for love with the depth of his past relationships.

His stage name, Guitarricadela Fuente, pays homage to his hometown as well as his instrument of choice, the guitar. "Guitarrica" is an Aragonese diminutive for guitar, while "dela Fuente" is derived from his last name, altogether combined to form a name that means "little guitar from the fountain."

As Guitarricadela Fuente wraps up his tour in Madrid, he is sure to have a lot more on the horizon. Whether it be his urban pop or folk music, Guitarricadela Fuente is a compelling addition to anyone's summer playlist.

(Sources: Genius, Rolling Stone)



F. Banno

## Heartbreak High stuns fans

by Jordan Park  
Website Manager

After two years, Netflix's Heartbreak High

is back for a third and final season. Inspired by a 90s Australian TV series with the same name, this reboot follows a new generation of Hartley High students and the chaos of their day-to-day lives.



A. Pan

This time around, Ameria Wadie (Ayesha Madon) and her classmates are taking on senior year and getting ready to face impending adulthood. In the new season, we see what starts off as a harmless prank war quickly spirals when a rival school, St. Bruno's, steals the head of Hartley High's mascot. In response, the group decides to get even by stealing a sculpted bust from St. Bruno's and attempts to display it on top of a carnival ride. Unsurprisingly, things don't go as planned, and the situation gets out of hand when a carnival worker gets seriously injured. Suddenly, the group is forced to cover up what happened or face the consequences of a police investigation. Of course, this is all happening along with everything else that comes with senior year: relationships, shifting friendships, and the quiet but constant pressure of figuring out what comes next after graduation.

As a long-time fan of the show, I'm definitely sad to see it go, but also content with how it ended. Season three contains much of what made the first two seasons so chaotic and unpredictable. From impromptu water gun fights to a cuckoo (their word for throwing a party at

someone else's house without them knowing), the Hartley High seniors are clearly making the most of their final year.

Underneath the fun, there's also a shift in tone. The stakes feel a little higher, and their decisions feel more permanent. It's not just about high school anymore; it's about what happens after.

The show does an excellent job of showing that there isn't just one right path. Some characters take gap years to travel, others go to trade school, and some head straight to four-year universities. The show also doesn't frame one option as better than the others, which is honestly refreshing. It's a subtle reminder that not everyone's life has to look the same after high school. The show also tackles real-life issues throughout its run time. One of the strongest examples is Quinni Gallagher-Jones (Chloe Hayden), whose character offers a meaningful and authentic representation of neurodiversity. Beyond that, the show weaves in storylines about mental health, abortion, sexuality, gender identity, diversity, and sexual assault. It makes these important topics a part of the characters' lives. Such an instance is when a police officer assaults Malakai Mitchell (Thomas Weatherall) and struggles to navigate his emotional trauma.

All in all, the show stands as an ode to growing up. It reminds the audience that high school is full of ups and downs. It's messy and confusing, but it's also made up of small moments that matter more than you'd expect. (Source: USA Today)

## Puth releases his latest album

by Sahil Muthukrishnan  
Culture Editor

After a four-year drought, Grammy-nominated artist Charlie Puth released his new album Whatever's Clever on Mar. 27. It's his fourth studio album and his latest work since his 2022 project, Charlie. It embraces yacht rock and the general air of the 70s and 80s.

Whatever's Clever opens with Changes, a classic Puth-style track. The ever-present snare drum that runs throughout the album, along with an air of preppiness, contributes to the song's sense of nostalgia. The rose-tinted glasses draw listeners in and keep them hooked for the rest of the album's hits. It's almost reminiscent of Take Me Higher or another upbeat song that would thrive in the 80s or 90s. Changes is a strong opener, setting the tone for a phenomenal project.

Beat Yourself Up, the album's second song, is sure to be a hit. The hook is infectious, and the mix of horns, playful bass, and piano meld together for an ideal aural experience. The elements combine perfectly with Puth's soothing vocals and tasteful use of Melodine (a vocal editing software). The track continues its predecessor's nostalgic qualities and whimsical nature. It's easy to imagine it on the radio or in a fan's midday lineup.

Puth's third track, Cry, adopts a more somber tone. The song is noticeably slower than Beat Yourself Up and Changes, but it maintains similar instrumentation. The elegant saxophone solo in the middle of its run time cuts through the noise and reveals the song's casual nature. It's a welcome pivot from the project's previous tracks while still feeling distinctly at home in the album's lineup.

Washed Up, the record's fourth entry, carries a relaxed vibe with layered harmonies and the album's signature horns. Reminiscent of elevator music, it would fit in on a chill playlist or on the beach during a hot summer's day.

New Jersey, Puth's fifth song, calls back to his Jersey roots. The track features R&B singer Ravyn Lenae, with her smooth vocals and effortless style. The entry fits with the rest of the project, but it definitely feels a bit aimless, dragging on at times.

Track six, Don't Meet Your Heroes, features a surprise orchestra, crisp harmonies, and Puth's sultry vocals. It features more piano than the rest and carries relaxed jazz elements. It's undoubtedly worth a listen, especially for fans of Puth's use of layered vocals. The track's lyrics have just enough potency to make the listener contemplate but not enough to distract them from Puth's serenade.

Some of the record's other standouts include Sideways, Love in Exile, and Until It Happens to You. Sideways, which features Coco Jones, is reminiscent of Puth's early hits like We Don't Talk Anymore. Love in Exile is an upbeat love song featuring Michael McDonald and Kenny Loggins.

Until It Happens to You, an optimistic hit about parenthood, features a surprise appearance by Jeff Goldblum and orchestral elements. All three shine in their own lights.

Whatever's Clever is a noteworthy installment in Puth's catalogue. Though it might occasionally come off as generic, it's mostly a phenomenal experience some of its songs will likely become classics.



A. Pan

## ZAMANSKY OVERVIEWS EILISH'S NEW FILM

by Lila Zamansky  
Media Production Editor

Global sensation Billie Eilish is set to debut her first-ever concert documentary, highlighting her, Hit Me Hard and Soft: (HMHAS) the Tour, on May 8. The film showcases the energy and impact of this successful album tour and is already generating major excitement among fans. This soon-to-be record-breaking film was directed by the acclaimed filmmaker James Cameron and Eilish herself, as the project promises an immersive personal look into her artistry and rise to fame.

The documentary draws media from Eilish's successful HMHAS tour. The tour itself was one of her most revolutionary achievements, as she performed at 106 different shows from September of 2024 to November of 2025. In total, the tour grossed an impressive 213 million dollars, establishing Eilish as one of the most influential artists of her generation. The documentary captures footage at various shows on her HMHAS tour, such as Manchester, England, and San Francisco, allowing the film to showcase the global scale of Eilish's fanbase and performances.

The film was delayed to allow additional time for refining clips from March to May of 2026. The team made this difficult decision to provide more time to perfect the ground-breaking visuals. The

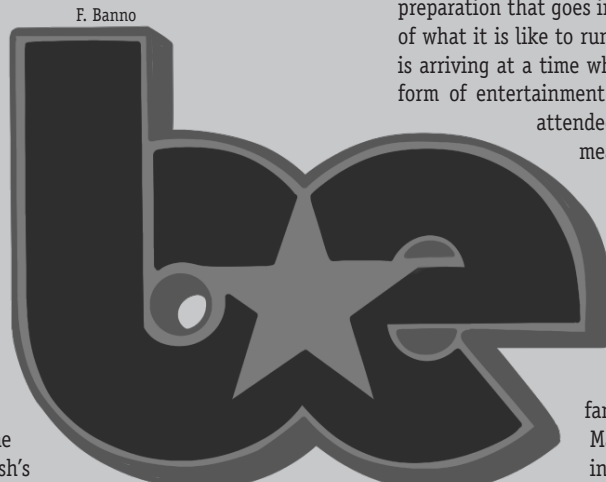
extra time reflects the effort and tedious work put into meeting this film's ambitious goal of incorporating concert film alongside raw talent and emotion put into Eilish's performances. This technique of filmmaking is innovative, as it applies advanced 3D technology designed specifically for theaters for the most immersive experience for the audience.

The film aims to give viewers an accurate experience, blending concert performances and behind-the-scenes moments. By merging personal storytelling with visuals, Eilish and Cameron aim to create emotional intensity and narrative experience. Live in 3D is more than just a recording of a concert. This allows people to fully grasp the energy and atmosphere of Eilish's performance. Cameron claimed this

project as a "dream" collaboration, further praising Eilish's artistry, professionalism, and singling out her greatness as the reason for the quality of the film.

Upon watching this film, fans can expect to see the intense preparation that goes into every performance, offering a glimpse of what it is like to run an international tour. The documentary is arriving at a time when concert films are evolving as a major form of entertainment, as they allow fans who may not have attended live shows to still experience them in a meaningful personal way. On the last night of the HMHAS tour in San Francisco, Eilish stated, "This is one of my favorite tours ever, and being able to capture it and co-direct this film with James Cameron has truly been a dream come true. I cannot wait for you all to see it." Together, these elements promise a groundbreaking film that redefines how fans connect with live music. Stay tuned for May 8 to see Hit Me Hard and Soft: The Tour in the theaters.

(Sources: Deadline, The Guardian)



F. Banno

# Project Hail Mary premieres to critical acclaim

by Nelson Kramer  
Editor-in-Chief

You awake to a robot talking to you. You're in a white room, surrounded by advanced technology, with two dead bodies to your left and right. Barely able to move, you manage to get up and figure out you are traveling on a spacecraft circling an unknown star. You realize you are the sole survivor of a three-person mission to save the world from a sun-eating amoeba called astrophage. This is the opening to the book and now-adapted movie Project Hail Mary.

Following the fifth anniversary of Project Hail Mary, the latest book release by author Andy Weir, the movie adaptation written by Drew Goddard and directed by Phil Lord and Christopher Miller hit theaters on Mar. 20. In only its opening weekend, it has blown past all expectations and proven itself to be one of the most successful book and film adaptations of our generation.



F. Banno

The story follows a middle-school science teacher whose true vocation is to save the world. Armed with his wit, problem-solving skills, and humor, the protagonist, Ryland Grace, played by Ryan Gosling, is the movie's biggest draw for fans of the book and first-time viewers alike. Although this movie was exhilarating to watch in theaters, I can agree with Weir's thoughts on the over-emphasis the marketing team put on Rocky, an alien the protagonist meets in space, as such a big part of stirring up hype for this film. With such a perfectly optimistic and driven protagonist, more questions arise about the necessity of emphasizing Rocky's character so heavily in the marketing for this movie.

Gosling performs the role of Ryland Grace to perfection, tempering his suicidal mission with humor that keeps the story moving at an exhilarating pace. Working with a great soundtrack that sets the emotional tone for the movie's heavy, awe-inspiring moments, the witty, funny side of how Grace solves science problems cannot be overstated enough.

Working within a budgeted run-time of two and a half hours, the on-screen adaptation is jam-packed with intricate details from the novel, and while some critique the missing feeling evoked from the endless sciencey explanations of the book, the screenwriters managed to keep the integrity of the original story. This film truly served the book's diehard fans; even without explicitly explaining the story's logical reasoning or scientific experimentation, it still delivered a story just as compelling as the one on the page.

Weir, otherwise known as the genius behind this story, along with the screenwriters, directors, and producers of the film, have brought us a slice of optimism we rarely see in modern fiction and sci-fi. From the protagonist pulling off the impossible while staying as funny as ever, to a story of true friendship, love, and respect for two beings from such different backgrounds and planets, Project Hail Mary is the epitome of an instant modern classic.

# Life's Still Unfair releases

by Chloe Wilson  
Culture Editor

Malcolm in the Middle, a popular 2000s show, released a spin-off titled Malcolm in the Middle: Life's Still Unfair. Streaming on Hulu on Apr. 10, the revival will feature original actors, including Frankie Muniz (Malcolm), Bryan Cranston (Hal), Jane Kaczmarek (Lois), Justin Berfield (Reese), and Christopher Masterson (Francis). The nostalgic show is sure to be a blast from the past as the original writers worked behind the scenes to restore some of the childhood nostalgia the show once brought to its viewers. Malcolm in the Middle

ran from January of 2000 to May of 2006, consisting of seven seasons and 151 episodes.

The new show will be a four-part series featuring Malcolm, grown up, living with his daughter, Leah (Keeley Karsten), and girlfriend, Tristan (Kiana Madeira), all while they navigate the same chaotic family with parallels from the original show. The drama in the new series includes Malcolm having to introduce his new family to his widely humiliating old one, who previously traumatized him throughout the original series.

The reunion among actors has clearly shown that their chemistry from filming the original show never wavered. About the filming of Life's Still Unfair, Cranston explained, "We just keep laughing and laughing." According to much of the cast, they have not reunited in decades since the

original show concluded. Thanks to Cranston, the cast has now rekindled their previous relationships. He added, "I've been wanting to do this for years, but it needed to be for a good reason. The story needed to be there, otherwise we'd just be hanging out in someone's house."

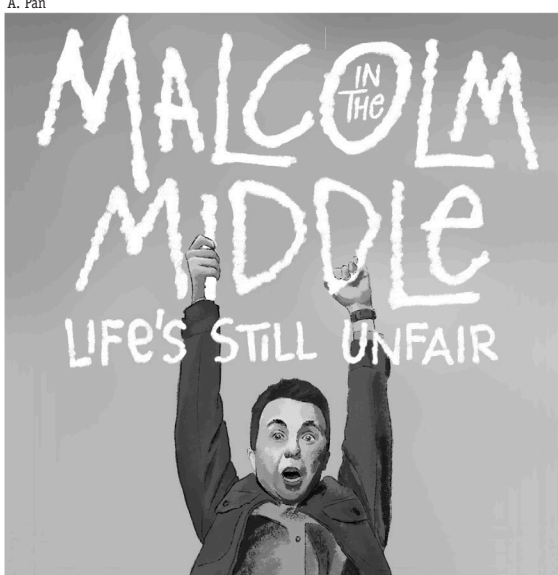
Since there was no remaining trace of the old set, original crew members on set had to piece together something similar using an original 8x10 sketch of the floor plan and scenes from the original show. Additionally, line producer Jimmy Simons aided in filling in the gaps of the set. Another conflict of creating the revival was

Muniz's schedule, as the actor is now a full-time driver for the NASCAR Craftsman Truck Series. Muniz elaborated, "I would film Sunday through Wednesday, fly Thursday, race Friday, and fly back Saturday. It was exhausting, but I also know how cool it is to have the opportunity to get to do this again, so I wasn't going

to complain at all. I am so thankful to everybody on the production for working around my NASCAR schedule."

The only significant character not returning from Malcolm in the Middle is fan-favorite Dewey, played by Erik Per Sullivan, who left acting in 2010. Though the original actor will not be back, Caleb Ellsworth-Clark, who resembles the original Dewey actor, will take his place. (Sources: Deadline, Entertainment Weekly, Newsweek, NY Times)

A. Pan



# Hoppers warms hearts

by Isabella Langner  
Center Editor

Even if you are not familiar with the movie Hoppers, you may recognize the viral lizard meme featuring a green, cross-eyed creature sticking its tongue out and screaming. In fact, this meme is what brought me to the theaters and honestly, I had the best time.

Pixar Studios released Hoppers on Mar. 6. As an animated comedy combined with science fiction, Hoppers is targeted towards PG audiences, but is enjoyable for all ages. The film follows Mabel, a college student and environmental enthusiast who shares a special connection to a forest glade where she had spent a lot of time with her late grandmother. As the town's mayor plans to destroy the glade for highway construction, Mabel discovers that if a singular beaver returns to the meadow, the town can no longer touch the habitat. Through her investigations, Mabel finds a program secretly run by a university professor that allows humans to place their consciousness into animal robots. She decides to steal a beaver robot to meet a beaver and convince it to return to the clearing.

In her new animal form, Mabel befriends the beaver king of the mammal world and starts integrating herself into the animal kingdom while

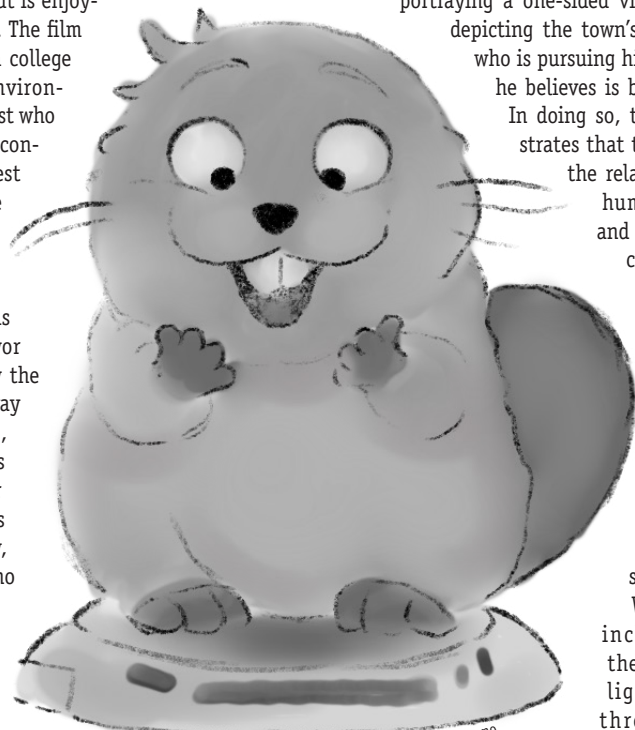
investigating why all the creatures moved out of the glade. As the animals begin several plots to kick the humans out, but the humans fight back, placing loudspeakers and disgusting smells adjacent to the glade to keep the animals out. However, when a new animal villain is introduced, Mabel, the king beaver, and a few others have to try to save the town's mayor.

The film serves to bridge the gap between the human and animal world and shows how we should stand up for nature. Hoppers digs deeper, not simply portraying a one-sided villain, but instead depicting the town's mayor as a man who is pursuing his career and what he believes is best for the town.

In doing so, the movie demonstrates that there is nuance to the relationship between human and animal, and there is a way to compromise. In the end, the highway project is halted, the glade is saved, and Mabel and the mayor work together to find a solution that suits them both. While the film includes complex themes, it keeps a lighthearted tone through dramatic irony, comedic dialogue, and adorably animated characters.

Hoppers also communicates the importance of standing up for yourself and being loyal towards friends through the relationship between Mabel and the king beaver.

Whether you are an environmental enthusiast or simply looking for a good movie to watch, Hoppers will not disappoint.



F. Banno

# BTS ALBUM ENERGIZES THEIR FANBASE AFTER HIATUS

by Tanvi Ambekar  
Opinion Editor

Korean boy band Bangtan Sonyeondan (BTS) is once again taking the internet by storm by releasing their latest album, Arirang. The collection consists of 14 tracks with the title track Swim, which BTS has called their most sentimental song yet.

BTS consists of seven members: Kim Seokjin (Jin), Kim Taehyung (V), Park Jimin, Kim Nam-joon (RM), Min Yoongi (Suga), Jeon Jungkook, and Jung Hoseok (J-Hope). Since their debut, they have released 27 albums, all of which have won numerous awards and earned them recognition across global markets.

Before BTS's debut, Korean pop music (K-pop) was relatively foreign to Western audiences. However, in 2020, BTS broke this pattern with their song Dynamite,

an upbeat English single with the danceability and rhythmic vocals common in Western pop culture at the time. The group and the song immediately rose to fame, and Dynamite's music video set a YouTube record for most views within 24 hours: 101.1 million. Less than a year later, they released Butter, their second all-English song that broke their own previous record: the music video reached an incredible 108.2 million views in its first day after release.

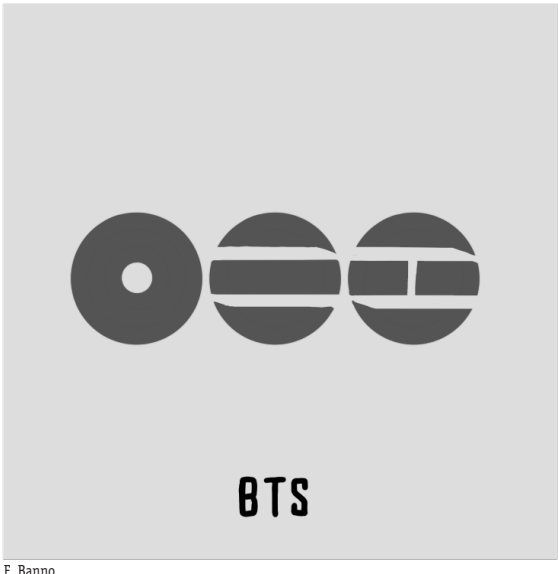
At the height of their popularity, the group was forced to take a temporary hiatus between 2022 and 2025 due to Korea's military service requirement. The members left on staggered schedules, slowly releasing solo albums and collaborations in the meantime, and finally reunited in June of 2025. On Jan. 15, their agency announced that the group would be releasing a new album, Arirang. The internet exploded with speculation about the styles of the songs, especially since multiple famous Western producers were known to have

been working on the album. As a result of the excitement surrounding its release, Arirang became the second most pre-saved album in Spotify history, joining Taylor Swift's Life of a Showgirl as the only other project to surpass five million pre-saves.

Soon after the release of the album, the tracks themselves became a topic of intense debate among fans who were surprised by the number of English lyrics. Although K-pop has slowly become Westernized over the past decade, BTS seems to be one of the only groups that can attract an international audience while staying true to their Korean roots. Arirang does this by combining English lyrics with traditional Korean instrumentals and vocal styles, creating a blend of genres that many older fans criticize.

Nevertheless, no one can deny the global impact of these new songs. The title track, Swim, became the fastest 2026 Spotify release to cross 100 million streams in just under a week. It debuted at No.1 on the Billboard Global 200 with 108.8 million streams and counting. Since their comeback, the group has appeared on multiple variety shows, stage performances, and award ceremonies and is showing no signs of slowing down.

Though the project may force some supporters to adjust their expectations, its impact is undeniable. Arirang is on track to be one of 2026's biggest albums, and it's only April! (Sources: Britannica, Guinness World Records, Nola, The Chosun Daily)



F. Banno

- Ambekar explains personality tests
- Habib critiques prediction markets

# HUMOR

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## Pan and Liu detail the Blind, Deaf, Mute Challenge

by Annabelle Pan and Lydia Liu  
Graphics Editor and Public Relations Manager

Only four years late to the trend, we attempted the Blind, Deaf, Mute Baking Challenge as a group of overconfident trouble-makers who are horrible at anything kitchen-related.

During the challenge, each person removes one of three senses — sight, hearing, or speech — and the team must work together to bake using broken, limited communication. After following, or attempting to follow, an online tiramisu recipe, we ended up with a soggy pan of bitterness. At least it was edible. Through the experience, we identified the best ways to enjoy yourself in the baking process.

Before starting the challenge, make sure that you are the one to claim muteness. You might get rage-baited by your so-called friends when they tell you to “use your words” during the challenge. You must endure the difficult task of coming up with understandable hand gestures. Despite the struggles, you made

the best decision because you can freely harass the blind friend without their knowing who it is. Poke them. Tickle them without fear of retribution. Steal ingredients directly out of their hands. Guide them confidently towards the trash can when they ask where the sink is.

If you do get stuck being blind, develop trust issues immediately. Every hand that grabs yours to “help” is a threat.

Every ingredient someone places in front of you is probably salt when they say it’s sugar. Your teammates are not your friends right now. They are gremlins with a mission to annoy you. Don’t worry; you can still fight back. Swing your arms around

like a torpedo while “searching” for the fridge. Scream so loudly that even the deaf person can hear you. Remind them that you are a menace to society, even without your sight.

The deaf participant appears to have the easiest job, which is precisely why it is the most psychologically damaging. You cannot hear the chaos around you. You cannot hear the blind person walking directly toward the open oven. You cannot hear the sound of something splatting on the floor or the bickering that ensues. You simply exist in peaceful, blissful ignorance while sanity crumbles three feet away. The best thing to do when you’re deaf during this challenge is to be as unhelpful as possible. Shake your head at the mute person’s hand gestures. Give the wrong instructions to your blind friend. Ignore the frantic taps on your shoulder begging for help. Show them that you feel no sense of collective responsibility.

The final product sat on the table looking like a three-year-old tried to make breakfast in bed. It was soggy, bitter, and unfinished. That raises the question: who holds the blame for the oversaturated ladyfingers? The mute did not successfully communicate the full instructions. The deaf gave badly-interpreted directions. The blind failed to understand unspoken ideas. What to do now with the evidence of our failure? We obviously covered it up with almost-expired whipped cream and offered it to innocent victims.

Do not fret! No friends were (severely) harmed in the making of this culinary disaster.



A. Pan

## Ambekar takes personality tests

by Tanvi Ambekar  
Opinion Editor

Does anyone else remember the personality test craze during the COVID-19 pandemic?? Because I can clearly recall the second I stepped back onto my elementary school campus, all my fifth-grade friends could talk about was what combination of arbitrary letters represented them. Suddenly, BFFs with “incompatible” personality types were acting like complete strangers. I endured two weeks of badgering about my own personality type before I sat down with my best friend and forced her to explain what the epidemic actually entailed.

The explanation that followed felt like verbal alphabet soup for my fifth-grade brain, so let me translate it into layman’s terms for you. According to her, the most famous of these tests, dubbed “16 Personalities,” takes your answers to 100 questions and categorizes you into one of 16 personality types, each labeled by four letters. Although I didn’t really understand it, peer pressure won, and I decided to take it.

As expected, the test made no sense, plus half the questions sounded the same anyway. The main issue is that the test likes to ask about unnecessarily theoretical topics, and if someone had gotten three hours of sleep that night, they might have trouble actually reasoning through them (I’m someone).

The only upside to the test — which took 45 minutes, by the way — was that it dubbed me an ENFJ, also known as a Protagonist. Now, this label I can agree with; I am charismatic, ambitious, and a

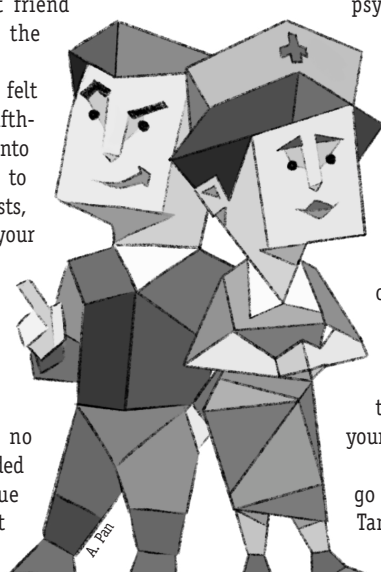
great leader. I have phenomenal social skills and naturally get people to agree with me, mostly because I’m always right. Was learning something I already knew worth my entire lunch break? Definitely not. But honestly, the test was spot-on in almost every characterization — except the part that warned against me possibly having an overinflated ego. How is that possible?

After some research, I learned that the test is based on the theories of Carl Jung, a pretty insignificant philosopher and disciple of borderline psychopath Sigmund Freud.

I’m not about to become my English 10 Honors teacher and lecture you about either of their psychological theories, but basically, they both argued that the human psyche consists of three parts: a savage part, an overly moral part, and a part responsible for balancing the two. The test tells you how dominant each portion is and how that forms your unique personality.

Looking back, I wish I could go back and tell fifth-grade Tanvi that this whole thing is a scam anyway. It’s like those BuzzFeed “Which Disney Princesses Are You

A Mix Of?” tests: just take the quiz for the dopamine hit and move on with your life. Hey, who knows — maybe if people quit relying on centuries-old psychological theories to tell them the meaning of their lives, they’d finally rely on their own judgment to make a decision for once.



A. Pan

## El Gatans conquer a marathon

by Sam Gruetter and Kayla Mitchell  
Editor-in-Chief and Public Relations Manager

Every child is told never to run from their problems, but we are doing just that: running exactly 26.2 miles away from ours. In order to escape both our senioritis and interesting relationship statuses, we have decided to sign up to run San Francisco’s marathon this summer. With absolutely zero training and a random wave of enthusiasm inspiring us to embark on a running journey, we will be channeling our excessive amounts of caffeinated energy towards this terrifying mission.

Credit for the beginning of this journey needs to be given to Sam. When your best friend excitedly approaches you asking to be your running partner for the summer, can you really say no to her big, happy smile? And running a marathon seems like something everyone casually talks about doing, so how hard can it really be? Well, here is what we have learned: maybe it is a good idea to actually check how long a marathon is before signing up. Unbeknownst to her fellow runner, Sam actually knows a thing or two about running and frequently greets her treadmill, while Kayla is just along for the chaos with no idea what she has gotten herself into.

The journey of a marathon is simple enough; you run 26.2 miles, whichever way most people run, concluding at the finish line with a medal and a complimentary t-shirt (if you make it

that far). The true test of character, the Sisyphus task if you will, is the daunting distance itself. For context, 26 miles is about 91,520 hot dogs laid end to end, about 260 laps around a high school track, about 26 miles farther than either of us would like to run on your average day, and about the distance between one good life decision and 25 miles of regret and agony. Now, the reason we have decided to take on this task is not far from the dramatic and heroic triumphs of Sisyphus (no, it is not to repent for our concerning high caloric intake when we are together), but instead the opportunity to grow closer as friends. We decided sleeping in the same bed, wearing each other’s clothes, and facing routine dating allegations (we are going to prom together) were not sufficient tests of our friendship; so, of course, our natural course of action was self-inflicted torture.

Now you may ask about our fitness levels, and if our bodies are equipped for such an athletic feat. We would counter that mental fortitude is the only true test of resiliency, but we are also working on that.

So no, we are far from peak marathon shape. In order to prepare for our easy morning run, we are recruiting our good running friend, **Kaley Do** to push us along. Having our third member outpace us each mile will keep us going and prevent any premature detours to a lunch spot we saw online mid-race. With the date approaching and little time to prepare, we will be pouring the next three months into rigorous training for our big running debut.



F. Banno

## Anand and Kramer explain edits

by Nelson Kramer and Advika Anand  
Editor-in-Chief and Graphics Editor

As film has evolved over the years, humans have seen black-and-white movies, big-budget blockbusters, romance novels, and even low-quality music videos. However, there is one other type of media that is more significant than all of these combined. This piece of media is able to perfectly encapsulate all feelings, whether heartbroken, affectionate, or loathsome. This entertainment is ... you guessed it, the edit!

Edits have been on the precipice of becoming a mainstream source of media for years, but some people are still stuck in the past. Why read from the New York Times about what some urban snob thinks of our favorite BL hockey romance when we could get it straight from the dark and sketchy corners of the internet? We hear our older population complain, “We used to spend our energy doing great things. We harnessed electricity, we went to the moon!” But honestly, some washed-up geezer isn’t going to tell us the facts when we can trust a 16-year-old perfecting their artistic craft.

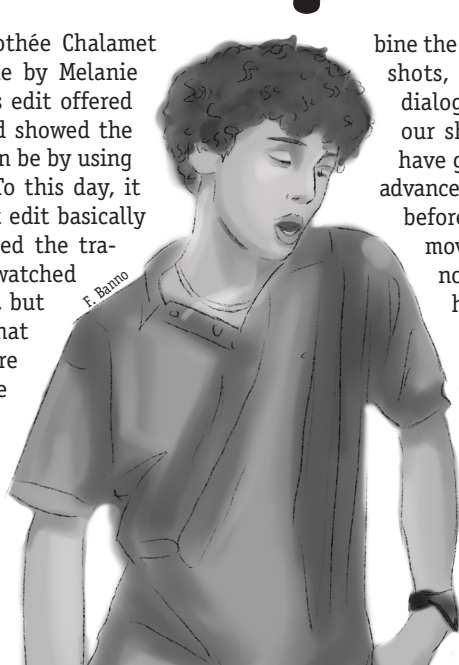
Since their origins in the 2010s, edits have advanced, and with these advancements have come more extensive creative liberties for editors to take the lead in their message. We would say that the greatest cultural reset in the edit

community came from the Timothée Chalamet edit featuring the song Playdate by Melanie Martinez way back in 2020. This edit offered a whole new style of editing and showed the world just how advanced edits can be by using velocity instead of transitions. To this day, it remains our Roman Empire. That edit basically got us through COVID. It changed the trajectory of editing, and we’ve rewatched it an unhealthy number of times, but we don’t think we can disclose that number in print. Some of my more recent favorite edits include the Jacob Elordi Never Be Like You edit, Steve “Am I dreaming or is that you?” Harrington, or ANY Nick Wilde edits. There seems to be a common theme here.

Honestly, we think edits are a more polished product than some movie trailers are at times. Hear us out: edits are able to quickly move through and com-

bine the most important parts of a movie through rapid shots, while trailers have unnecessary, redundant dialogue and often spoil the movie. It’s not just our short attention span, we swear; movie trailers have gotten worse, and edits just keep getting more advanced. Sometimes, we even look up edits for a movie before we watch it just to check out the vibes the movie will bring. It is very important, however, not to get spoilers whilst enjoying edits. This has happened to us far too many times when we get excited about the first season of a show, look up edits, and find one that reveals the whole plot and the character that dies tragically halfway through the show.

In the new world of global politics and diplomacy taking place directly through social media platforms like Instagram and X, edit makers have more power than ever. Edits of TV shows, movies, and inspirational speeches can affect someone’s psyche so significantly that their entire mood for the day changes. Edits give power back to the people, just like journalism used to.



F. Banno

# Strahs answers all tic-related questions

by Hayley Strahs  
Editor-in-Chief

Ticks are parasitic blood-sucking insects that can transmit red meat allergies and Lyme disease, while tics are involuntary movements or sounds associated with neurodevelopmental disorders. Luckily for me, I can eat as many hamburgers as I want. Unluckily for me, I have tics (without the k). If I've ever rolled my eyes or made an unpleasant face at you, I swear I didn't do it on purpose. But even so, I'll usually take the blame for a rude look in exchange for not having to answer a bajillion questions about my tics. But since I'm graduating soon, I thought I'd finally clear the air and provide a Tic FAQ for my fellow Wildcats.

**Question: Are you making faces at me?**

**Answer:** No. Well, yes. It's not on purpose, and I don't mean anything by it. Feel free to giggle if I look like Jim Carey.

**Question: Do you have Tourette's?**

**Answer:** No. I am faking my tics for attention. I've been committed to the bit since I was seven years old, and I've continued it out of sheer boredom.



A.Pan

**Immediate Next Question: Why would you fake something like that?** **Answer:** OMG did you think I was being serious? It's true that I don't have Tourette's Syndrome; I have ADHD, and while tics aren't a part of the diagnostic criteria, they're somewhat common in people with the condition. It's like a free DLC that most people grow out of during puberty.

**Question: Can you just... stop it?** **Answer:** Nope! If I could just "stop" my tics, do you really think I'd be rolling my eyes at an interviewee? Or violently shaking my head during a Socratic seminar? Trust me, I'd love to just "stop" my tics and avoid every awkwardly-timed electromagnetic signal that my brain interprets as "let's make faces at people!"

While I can't fully stop my tics, I can hold them in when I really need to. Situations where this is necessary include (but are not limited to): the Title IX MOSAIC lesson, cutting off LGHS staff while trying to park, getting my ID photo taken, subsequently getting a retake for said ID photo, and interviewing for a job. I've learned some of these the hard way, and I sincerely apologize to anyone I've emoted on in the senior lot.

Most of the time, questions like the ones I listed don't even come up. In 2026, it's much easier to come to your own conclusions rather than simply ask. I imagine that my peers think I'm a robot transmitting morse code signals back to my charging station. In reality, I'm actually practicing echolocation to find others with tics. The more of us there are in one place, the more our strength grows. Scientifically, this occurs because we all lower our shields and merge our power into one.

As difficult as having tics is (especially in high school), I don't see a point in hiding them anymore. Like Jim Carey's on-command grinch face, my tics scare little kids and mildly surprise or barely faze my peers. Hopefully my lesson in Tics 101 helped answer some of your questions.

## Littfin shares NeeDoh struggles

by Kat Littfin  
Editorial Editor

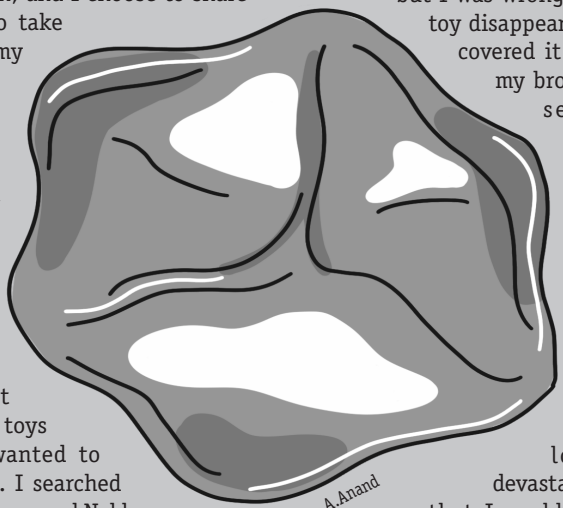
It is difficult to walk through the LGHS hallways without spotting the objects that are sweeping the nation, or rather, the teenage population here at LG: NeeDohs. These sensory fidget toys have become increasingly popular over the past year across Generation Z because who doesn't love to have something to fidget with during class? I have always been enamored with NeeDohs, but over the past few weeks, I realized I cannot have one of my own. My misfortunes with NeeDohs have made me come to terms with this depressing truth, and I choose to share these stories to take the edge off of my circumstances.

My NeeDoh dilemma first came to light a few weeks ago, when I set out in search of one in stores downtown. I had grown jealous of my friends who kept bringing their toys to class and wanted to obtain my own. I searched three stores: Barnes and Noble, Walgreens, and Automobuild. On separate days, I had seen the coveted objects in all three stores, so I thought my mission would be an easy one - I had three promising options of stores. However, in each store I entered, the NeeDohs were sold out or not stocked at all. I was disappointed, but I did not take it as a sign. Instead, I used my failure to motivate me to find my destined NeeDoh. I knew my perfect NeeDoh, like a Harry Potter wand, would choose me.

After my shopping mishap, I tried to test run some of my friends' NeeDohs, and even that was catastrophic. Every time I would squish their NeeDohs at school, I would continually drop them. These objects attract dirt and debris instantaneously, so I received some disgusted glares from my friends. When I went to my friend Sophia's house for a sleepover and was absentmindedly fidgeting with one, I popped it. The gooey interior splattered all over her bed, my hands, and my clothes. When fellow El Gaton Chloe Wilson offered me one of her old NeeDohs to keep, I thought my curse was over,

but I was wrong. One day, the toy disappeared. I only discovered it when I asked my brother if he had seen it, and he promptly pulled it out of his pocket. Shortly after its change in ownership, I noticed that the stopper on the NeeDoh was coming loose. I was devastated, but I was sure that I could keep it safe. Only days later, I popped it while it was on my bed, which meant me dirtying yet another pair of sheets with my NeeDoh misadventures.

I have since given up on finding a NeeDoh for myself. I should have known, as I had similar misfortunes with fidget spinners and slime during their respective crazes. Alas, I have accepted my fate. Maybe it's the universe telling me not to follow trends and to make my own path, or whatever those motivational videos say.



A.Anand

## LIU TALKS MORNING TERRORS

by Lydia Liu  
Public Relations Manager

Unlike middle school, my high school classes have never felt so applicable to my actual life. I can tell you how the human body works thanks to Biology, how much sleep a teenager needs thanks to Health and Fitness, and how woefully unprepared all of that knowledge has left me for what happens every single morning.

Everyone knows about the morning alarm. It goes off, you dismiss it. It goes off again, you dismiss it with more conviction. By the third alarm, you have already imagined yourself getting up, walking across the room, and turning it off, which your brain counts as close enough before you drift back into unconsciousness, convinced that you handled the situation. I have spent the better part of this year peeling myself off my mattress to silence an alarm that seems to go off earlier every single morning. Four hundred times, give or take. Clearly, whoever put this schedule together has never once had to follow it themselves.

Even though I always go to bed feeling like an intellectual, full of plans, ambitions, and the delusion that I will wake up on time, I cannot help but notice that somehow, every morning, I open my eyes and it is already 8:19 AM. I do not know how this happens. I remember setting four alarms. I named them. I put a different ringer for each one. I gave them motivational messages like "WAKE UP U LAZY BUM" and "YOU WILL REGRET THIS." And yet here we are, 11

minutes before first period, and I am doing the most unhinged thinking of my life: trying to figure out if dry shampoo counts as a shower.

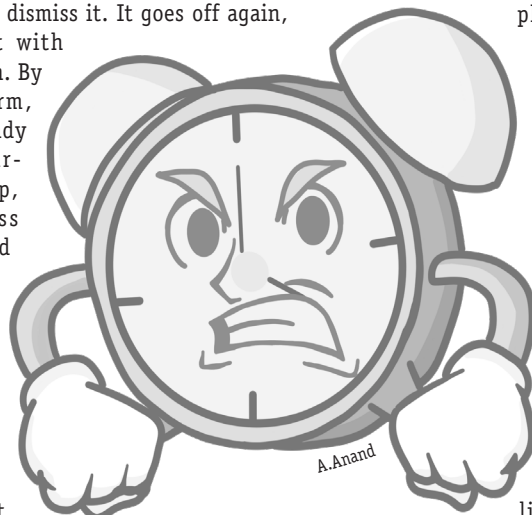
For all you overachievers and morning people who bounce out of bed looking fresh and well-rested: first of all, who hurt you, and second of all, do not come up to me in the morning and comment on my hair looking like a bird's nest because I have a legitimate excuse. It is called delayed sleep phase syndrome. Look it up. Teenagers' bodies are literally programmed to fall asleep later and wake up later, so early school start times aren't just annoying, they're working directly against our circadian rhythms.

Saturday morning I am up before anyone asks me to be. No alarm, no parent cracking the door open, no threats about being late. I just wake up, naturally, feeling like a functional human

being. But Monday comes and suddenly I am the laziest person alive who needs to learn some responsibility. Same kid. Same phone. Same everything. The only thing that changed was which Lydia decided when I had to open my eyes. If my habits were ruining my sleep, why do they only seem to ruin it on school days? The only thing that changed is that school is not involved. I am not the problem. The schedule is.

For now, I am officially signing off and submitting my formal request for school to start at 10:00 AM, or, better yet, noon. Until administration can sort this out, you can find me in my bed, horizontal, unbothered, and finally getting the nine hours of sleep my brain so desperately needs.

I will see you all eventually, probably in seventh period.



A.Anand

# HABIB TALKS THE INSANITY OF PREDICTION MARKETS

by Ivan Habib  
Website Manager

Prediction markets are one of the strangest inventions of the internet. After all, they're one of the only places where a random person on their couch with a username like "67Sigma" can, based on pure vibes, outperform full-blown research institutions, journalists, and quantitative analysts. Often, a single meme can liquidate a hedge fund's decades of research. At their essence, prediction markets are like futures contracts that are priced purely on sentiment and lack concrete evidence.

The beauty of prediction markets is that they represent the impulses of millions. They are extremely dynamic and can capture one-off social media posts and breaking news lightning quick due to the fact that a random person with their phone, as opposed to full corporate bureaucracies, is the only needed driver. However, the people on these sites are the same people who hype up meme stocks that drop to pennies and are most susceptible to obviously fake news. This has led to major social media influencers deliberately spreading fake news in order to sway prediction market outcomes. In many ways, prediction markets function as a smaller, more democratized NYSE where all the floor traders are haphazard users on Reddit or X.

The real problem with prediction markets is that the better they work, the more they start to look like a crime scene someone forgot to cordon off. When contract prices shoot up minutes after a supposedly private negotiation, it is a little hard to dismiss this change as a difference in vibes rather than insider trading. The "wisdom of the crowd" becomes a euphemism for "definitely insider trading," and this line becomes thinner and even more difficult to enforce when the only identification you have of someone is the same profile picture of a cat and a username like "SkibidiAura."

One of the most prominent examples of these "insider-trading, but totally not" schemes is when a Polymarket user reportedly bet twenty thousand dollars that the Venezuelan president would be forced out by January, and mere hours later walked out with four hundred thousand dollars when that very military operation took place. The claim is merely a "lucky guess" and looks a lot more like the actions of a movie villain who appears only to win the lottery, then dips.

In the end, prediction markets are the only place where a cautious PhD in economics and someone eating cereal in their underwear who has too strong a gambling itch hold the same authority, and somehow the cereal guy wins. Prediction markets demonstrate that a simple game fueled by fraud and pajamas can destroy the centuries of institutional building for prediction. The next time you see a major shift in anything - from politics to the release of GTA VI - do not check the news, just check the "crowd wisdom" on Polymarket. (Please do not take my financial advice.)



A.Anand

- Miletich engages in medicine and sports
- Horwitz queues up for track CCS

# PEOPLE

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## Sophomore Tseng explores sports through fencing, lacrosse, and pickleball

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

Lacrosse recruit and pickleball enthusiast, sophomore **Cooper Tseng** leads with an adventurous spirit, making the most of his high school career.

With a full academic schedule, Tseng has a well-rounded but challenging course load. He is enrolled in Chemistry, Algebra 2 Accelerated, English 10, AP European History, Spanish 3, and Digital Photography. Tseng's favorite class is Digital Photography, where he expresses his creativity. He shared that he has discovered a passion for photography: "I find joy in taking photos of different aspects in my life. I like trying new things and trying out different camera angles, lenses, and techniques."

As his sporting events take up vast amounts of time after school, Tseng manages his tasks meticulously to ensure everything is done efficiently.



Additionally, Tseng has been an avid fencer since a young age. As a member of the Bay Area Fencing Club, he has participated competitively in local and national tournaments since he was 11 years old. Tseng describes fencing competitions as "extremely fun because the competition is very hard, but you see a lot of the same people over and over again. It is just a fun environment to be immersed in."

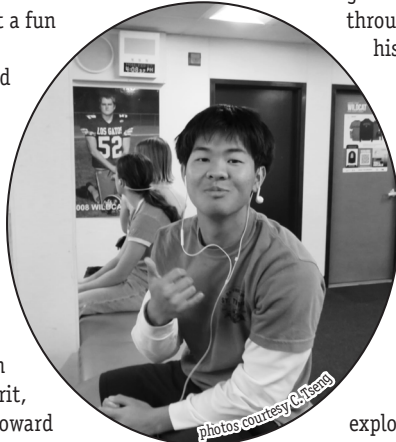
Tseng has only recently embarked on lacrosse this spring. His friends' encouragement and lively team environment inspired him to join the program. Tseng plays midfield, proving to be a valuable asset to both offensive and defensive players. Tseng also strives to maintain a positive mindset and keep the mood light with his teammates. He enjoys each player's determination, emphasizing the grit, drive, and passion required to lead them toward favorable outcomes. Although games can be intense, Tseng has full trust and confidence in his teammates, proud of their ability to rely on each other and make every moment count. Tseng

described the transition from individual sports to team athletics, saying that although he noticed an adjustment, "It's not as different as you would think because even in fencing, you still have a community around you, although tournaments can be very different."

Tseng has learned to navigate a variety of environments through each of his athletic endeavors, reflective of his venturesome personality.

Further developing his athletic and personal pursuits, Tseng founded the LGHS Pickleball Club this semester. This created an outlet for him to utilize his leadership skills as president, while also participating in an activity he is passionate about. Tseng elaborated that although it can be a struggle to balance a variety of personalities in his club while organizing tournaments and meetings, he enjoys the challenge and fun opportunities the club presents.

Whether leading the pickleball community, exploring new hobbies, or succeeding in fencing tournaments, Tseng thrives in any environment. He urges his peers to "be the rainbow in someone else's clouds" and make the most of every opportunity.



photos courtesy of Tseng

## Miletich pursues volleyball, academics, and medicine

by **Britt Melinauskas**  
*National Editor*

Tenacious and driven junior **Silvia Miletich** takes on all endeavors in her third year at LGHS with extracurricular pursuits, academic excellence, and athletic accomplishments.

After moving to Los Gatos in the summer before eighth grade, Miletich became involved in all aspects of leadership, embracing opportunities to voice her concerns for change and support others. Within LGHS, she serves as co-president of the National Spanish Honors Society (NSHS) and initially became drawn to the culture. As she claimed: "Growing up in Los Angeles, a lot of my friends growing up had Spanish-speaking parents, and I lived in that environment. So I was able to pick up Spanish pretty quickly and had a good understanding." Specifically, Miletich enjoys that she can align her position in the club with volunteering opportunities such as the House of Hope and the Sunday Friends Foundation. Furthermore, she is the vice president of the Cats Who Care Club, a group that focuses on supporting children with disabilities and mental health challenges. With the club, she assists in planning projects for volun-



teering and creating opportunities that positively impact both the students involved and the individuals they serve. Her contributions extend beyond the LGHS community, as Miletich has been part of the National Charity League since seventh grade, engaging in numerous volunteering positions to better herself and the people around her.

This year, Miletich has immersed herself in AP Calculus AB, AP US History, AP Language, AP Biology, Spanish 4 Honors, and Associated Student Body (ASB). In ASB, Miletich is the vice president of the junior class, organizing events such as Kindness Week, Junior Prom, and various fundraisers. In addition to her courses paralleling her involvement in cultural aspects and leadership positions, it highlights a future career path for her in the medical field. Over the summer, Miletich volunteered at Los Gatos Orthopedic Sports Therapy after she injured a part of her back and wanted to learn more about the aspects of

physical therapy. She worked with student-athletes at San Jose State, pre-professional athletes, older individuals, children with disabilities, and directly shadowed the staff. Miletich explained how the experience was extremely informative, furthering her understanding of different parts of the body and what exercises treat certain issues. At the same time, the opportunity opened her view of a future major that involves patient interaction within medicine.

Currently in her second year with the Mountain View Volleyball Club, Miletich competes as a middle blocker, continuing to build on her experience after two years with Vision Volleyball Club. She began her volleyball career playing beach volleyball in Los Angeles before transitioning to indoor competition. At LGHS, she has been a member of the varsity volleyball team since



photos courtesy of S. Miletich

her freshman year, one of only two freshmen to earn that spot. Miletich's ambition radiates in everything she accomplishes, and there is no doubt she will continue to thrive in all of her future endeavors.

## Berenbaum participates in theater

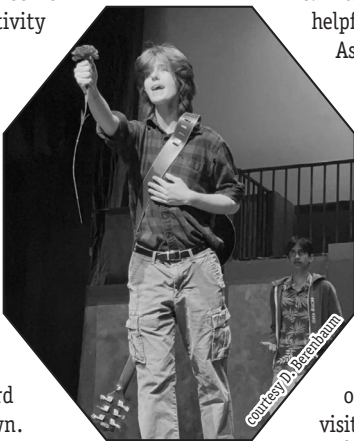
by **Hayley Strahs**  
*Editor-in-Chief*

From on the stage with a guitar to on the sidewalk with his skateboard, senior **Day Berenbaum** radiates positivity wherever he goes.

As opposed to walking or driving, Berenbaum skateboards to and from school every day. He reflected on starting the hobby in fifth grade: "I picked it up with my best friend at the time, and we used to go to a skate park every Saturday." He stopped doing tricks while briefly living in Arizona, but he still uses his board for transportation around town.

A longtime theater kid, Berenbaum performed in LGHS's production of *Hadestown* as the Orpheus understudy and a principal member of the ensemble. Orpheus had been a long-time dream role for Berenbaum. He explained, "I like playing yearners." For the upcoming Dramatic Desserts fundraiser on May 23, Berenbaum will play another pining man: Mal Beineke in *The Addams Family*, this year's student-run one-act musical. Prior to transferring to LGHS, Berenbaum was in *The Addams Family* at Stamford American International School in Singapore. However, this production will be different. He reflected, "Because I'd been [at my old school] for 10 years, I was anxious about what everyone thought of me and stuff...here, I'm not really worried about that anymore, and it definitely shows."

Theater isn't Berenbaum's only musical calling. After transferring to LGHS, Berenbaum immediately found his home away from home in the



choir department with choir director **Maricel Riley**. Reminiscing on his first year at LGHS, he recalled, "I made so many friends in choir. And Ms. Riley is amazing; she's been really helpful both musically and socially."

Aside from singing, he plays five instruments: guitar, ukulele, bass, drums, and piano. His interest in music emerged after watching the movie *Sing* and admiring the guitar-playing hedgehog; he's been engrossed ever since. Music runs in Berenbaum's family; his grandmother, whom he lovingly refers to as Granny, gave him his first guitar. They often play music together when he visits her in Florida.

After living across America and around the world, Berenbaum has decided to call Florida his home for the next four years. Eckerd College in St. Petersburg was the perfect choice for Berenbaum due to its strong marine biology program and close proximity to Berenbaum's granny. Since he was little, Berenbaum's adoration for sharks has drawn him to marine biology. Sharks are special to Berenbaum because "there's so many and there's always new things to learn. It's kind of an evolving field, and we don't know everything, but I want to." He is currently working on a personal research paper in which he delves into his favorite sharks, like the thresher shark, and their characteristics.

Considering his various experiences and hobbies, don't be shocked if Berenbaum becomes a famous shark-researcher-meets-singer-songwriter someday. When it comes to music, marine biology, or self-expression, Berenbaum is your guy.

## Kelley excels in rowing

by **Julia Valencia and Tanvi Ambekar**  
*Opinion Editors*

**Makayla Kelley** is no stranger to hard work, tackling her freshman year at Los Gatos High School and her fourth year rowing at Los Gatos Rowing Club (LGRC) with both ambition and intensity. Kelley is willing to do it all: waking up early to get in extra workouts and completing homework in the car on her way to a race are just two of the ways she gracefully balances the demands of school and athletics.

As she reaches the halfway mark of her eighth season with LGRC, Kelley has plenty to be proud of, and even more on the horizon. Before joining crew, Kelley admitted that she had "tried so many sports before, and nothing seemed to click. I was like, 'I like [these sports], but they're not my thing.'" That changed when Kelley enrolled in the club's Learn to Row program. Almost immediately, she felt a connection with the sport. "I loved it, and I decided to pursue it," Kelley recalled. Now, four years later, her dedication has paid off, earning her numerous awards. Among these is a bronze medal from the 2025 Youth National Championships, where she raced in the highly competitive Under 16 Eight category.

Kelley shared that her love for the sport extends to the people she works with: "The rowing community is awesome." Since she discovered the sport, Kelley aspires to row on a collegiate level and just wants to "see how many levels [of rowing she] can achieve."

Kelley entered high school committed to diversifying her schedule and skill sets early on. She is currently taking both Chinese and Manufacturing Technology 1, a course that teaches students the basics of woodworking and metalworking in a collaborative environment. Although Kelley will "definitely do something different next year," she is enjoying her current welding project.

She acknowledged that Manufacturing Technology is "a challenging class for me personally, but I think it's a cool class overall." Outside of her electives, Kelley genuinely values her Physical Education class, which is currently in its running unit. The extra exercise aligns well with her passion for rowing, and because she is a naturally athletic person, she uses physical activity as a way to relieve stress. In her own words, "I just like moving my body, whether that's hiking or swimming or running."

Working out provides an escape from the chaos of everyday life, and Kelley aims to turn that love into something that can benefit the community as well. She is currently working on a passion project focused on helping the senior population in Los Gatos stay physically active, and she is enjoying "working with more elderly people and trying to keep them fit [and] just increasing their overall lung capacity."

As her rowing season ramps up and the school year enters its final months, Kelley remains committed to maintaining athletic and academic excellence.



courtesy of M. Kelley

# Senior Halle Cole shines alongside her community

by Tanya Chang  
Sports Editor

LGHS senior and future Brigham Young University (BYU) student

**Halle Cole** is turning her passion for helping others into a future career path.

As Cole prepares to attend BYU, she plans to pursue nursing, fostering her goal of becoming a labor and delivery nurse. Her inspiration sparked from her love of babies and the hospital environment. She looks forward to taking classes that reflect her interests, including nutrition and world literature, and is enthusiastic to explore courses outside of high school requirements. With family ties to BYU and years spent visiting the campus, Cole describes her decision as natural. She shared that it has “always been where I’ve imagined myself when thinking about college,” expressing how the atmosphere feels as though she were at home.

Athletics have always played a meaningful role in Cole’s high school experience, specifically field hockey. Although Cole had hoped



to join earlier in her high school career, health concerns delayed her start until junior year. She was primarily drawn to the sport because of the supporting community it offered. As she explained, “I wanted to join field hockey since freshman year, mostly because of the sisterhood everyone always talked about.” A defining moment last year came during a Central Coast Section quarterfinal game, where Los Gatos lost to Willow Glen High School. This difficult loss pushed Cole to work harder and improve for the following year. During the field hockey season, academics remained manageable as she utilized her time well before games and practices.

Community service has also had an impact on Cole’s perspective, as she has had the chance to

visit Africa through a volunteer trip, building classrooms for local schools. The physical work, which included mixing cement, carrying cinder blocks, and preparing foundations, was the most grueling but rewarding thing she has ever done. Beyond the construction, the overall experience altered her outlook on life as she witnessed poverty but also so much joy within a community. “My perspective in general changed drastically,” she reflected, adding that the experience helped her recognize how fortunate she is and encouraged her to stretch her limits.

Cole’s faith as a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints continues to guide her values and decisions and influences both her commitment to service and her choice to attend BYU. She strives to practice daily kindness and hopes to be surrounded by people who practice and share similar beliefs.

Participating in athletics, volunteering, or preparing for a future in healthcare, Cole aims to become someone who “always tries their best in every aspect of life, no matter what,” and approaches opportunity with determination and gratitude.



photos courtesy: Halle Cole

# Netser pursues a career in economics

by Atharava Pandey  
Sports Editor

With eyes set on the future, junior **Ben Netser** chases the best version of himself while making the most of his high school experience. Netser’s rigorous course load this year includes

PreCalculus Honors, AP US History, AP English Language and Composition, AP Physics 1, AP Psychology, and Spanish 3. However, he mentions that his favorite subject is AP Lang, as he enjoys the creative outlet and the critical thinking skills required to make connections to real-world problems. Describing his strenuous academic schedule, Netser described, “It’s definitely been a challenge, especially after sophomore year. There’s definitely a big jump in the workload, but it’s also a lot more interesting. I feel I connect a lot more to my classes.” As someone who likes a challenge, Netser



courtesy: Ben Netser

is clearly excited about improving himself as he strives for success in these hard classes.

Outside of the classroom, Netser excels in the pool as a member of the school’s varsity swim team. Netser’s main event is the 100-meter butterfly; yet he also competes in distance events such as the 500-meter freestyle. His choice of events requires extreme mental perseverance and top-notch physical fitness in order to remain competitive. About his experience as a swimmer, Netser reflected, “I really enjoy swimming just because it’s really challenging. You are going

against your instinct to breathe. It’s individual, but also a team sport with people cheering you on. It’s a lot of discipline as well.” Swimming is just one of the ways Netser can take his mind off an otherwise hectic schedule.

While Netser has many interests, his main passion lies in economics. Netser has explored this curiosity to the fullest, starting a Financial Literacy Club on campus last fall, where he creates engaging lesson plans for his club members and hosts many guest speakers who are experts in their fields. Netser is passionate about setting up a secure financial future for himself and helping others do the same. Explaining what initially sparked his interest in economics, Netser said, “My dad is big in the financial sector. So, I tried it out just to dip my foot into the water and found that financial analysis was very interesting.” To gain further knowledge about economics and potential future career choices, Netser enjoys activities such as working with finance professionals, researching, and reading papers.

When asked about his life motto, Netser stated, “Stay curious. Because once you find your curiosity, your work ethic will follow.” Netser clearly demonstrates this in everything that he does. Whether it be inside the classroom, in the pool, or in his free time, Netser’s daily routine reflects his consistent drive to improve as he pushes himself to grow.

# Horwitz thrives on LGHS track team

by Advika Anand and Quinn Hathaway  
Graphics and Media Production Editors

Track star and leadership enthusiast **Kiley Horwitz** is setting the pace for her sophomore year with hard work, determination, and perseverance. This student-athlete is preparing for an epic track season ahead, with a personal goal of breaking a five-minute mile by her senior year; she aims to do so through rigorous training.

Although this is Horwitz’s second year on the track team, she is smashing personal records (PR) after PR. Horwitz runs the 1600 (mile), the 4x8 (800-meter relay event), and the 800 (two laps). During this season, she has accomplished three personal records, with her current best mile time at 5:20. She runs the 4x800 with seniors **Ella Crites** and **Kaley Do**, along with junior **Elise Greenstreet**, and noted that she “loves the team and they make [running the event] so much fun.” In addition to her track and field ambitions, Horwitz is also an avid cross-country runner, although 2025 was her first year on the team. She commented, “I love how the cross country team is so close, and we had so much fun at pasta feeds and meets.” Horwitz plans to continue participating in both cross country and track during her junior year.

Regarding academics, Horwitz is enrolled in Honors English, AP European History, Algebra 2 Accelerated, Chemistry, Leadership, and Spanish 3. She especially enjoys her history class, stating, “Although it’s difficult and stressful at times, it is really fun and educational at the same time.” Hor-

witz credits **Stephanie Pearson** for her success in the class because Pearson makes sure that the learning environment is both lively and informative. Horwitz emphasized that many of her classes are more difficult this year, noticing that rigor increases with her grade level. However, she takes the challenges in stride, as putting school first is an important value she plans to carry beyond graduation. She acknowledges that it can be challenging at times to balance both academics and athletics, but she recognizes the importance of both.

Horwitz is also involved in a number of extracurricular activities, with a large portion of her time dedicated to the school leadership team. Horwitz and classmate Marco Machado are the sophomore class spirit representatives for the 2025-26 school year. Tapping into the artistic aspects of her personality, this Horwitz noted that “being one of the spirit representatives is like a creative outlet.” An additional source of creativity in Horwitz’s life is her passion for LEGOs, with building the figures being a relaxing pastime. Her favorite is the Avengers Tower, which consists of 5,201 pieces.

Horwitz truly strives to reach her goals, and once she sets them, there is no stopping her from achieving them. This sophomore is headed for success. No matter if she’s on the track or in the classroom, Horwitz is living to the fullest, encompassed by her philosophies, goals, and hobbies.



courtesy: Kiley Horwitz

# Cheng takes part in orchestra, swim, and Boy Scouts

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

Multi-faceted individual **Landon Cheng** is thriving in his freshman year of high school as he shines on stage, in the water, and in his community.

Cheng’s current course load is more than enough to keep most people busy. He is enrolled in Biology Honors, Health & Fitness, Intro to Engineering, Spanish 2, Philharmonic Orchestra, Algebra 2 Accelerated, and English 9. Among all of his classes, Spanish 2 and Orchestra stand out as his favorites. He credits his enjoyment of Spanish to the prospect of one day speaking another language fluently. “I just like the opportunity to become bilingual because it’s pretty cool,” he explained.

Outside of newfound interests such as Spanish, the cello is a prominent part of Cheng’s life as he has been playing the instrument since he was in elementary school, six years and counting. Cheng sharpens his cello skills both in the school’s Philharmonic orchestra as well as in his private lessons. Many might recognize Cheng’s musical abilities through his contributions to this year’s spring musical production, Hadestown. As part of the pit orchestra, Cheng played for every single production for the entire duration of the play. Referring to the challenges and

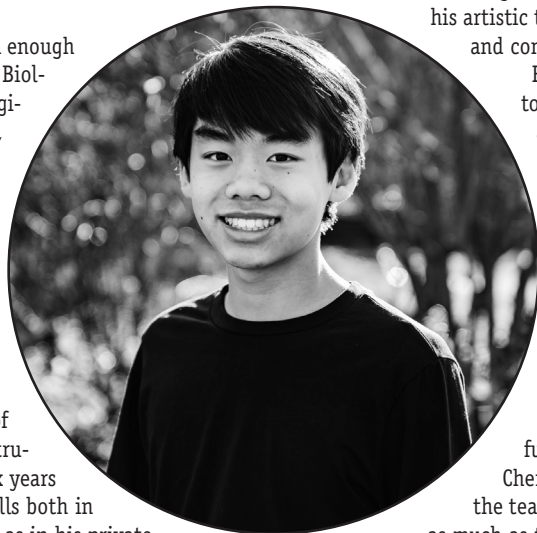
rewards of being part of the pit orchestra, Cheng shared, “It’s hard work, but it’s fun trying to use cello in different ways, like interacting with the choir and the theater.” Through private lessons and musicals, Cheng has plans for the future to contribute his artistic talents to creating a wedding quartet and continuing to hone his skills.

Beyond music, Cheng also makes time to be an enthusiastic member of the JV swim team, competing in the 100-meter breaststroke. He is also a member of the JV water polo team, adding yet another sport to his already packed schedule. When talking about swimming, the conversation does not stay on competing for long. His teammates are what he gravitates towards; as he put it: “I just love bonding with the team. And the meets are really fun. We get to cheer for each other.” For Cheng, that sense of community within the team is something he clearly values just as much as the sport itself.

Outside of his school commitments, the Boy Scouts has played a big role in shaping the person Cheng has become. He has taken on service projects through the program, including a ranch camp and a two-week backpacking trip through New Mexico planned

for the summer. Those kinds of experiences are irreplaceable for Cheng as he explained, “It teaches you a lot of valuable leadership skills, because you can only learn so much from a textbook or online, but you really have to experience working with different people to gain those skills.”

Although still unsure what the future holds, through passion and hard work, Cheng will indeed leave a lasting impact during his time in high school.



photos courtesy: L. Cheng

- Swim and Dive nears end of season
- Boys' golf excels in its early matches

# SPORTS

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## UCLA finishes a historic season with the championship title

by **Chloe Wilson**

Culture Editor

On Sunday, Apr. 5, the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) defeated the University of South Carolina (USC) in the NCAA Women's March Madness tournament championship. UCLA obtained its first



courtesy/wikimedia commons

HOORAY: The Bruins celebrate after winning their first Women's March Madness title.

tournament win in school history, ending with a score of 79-59 in the final. Both teams were the number one seed in their regions, making for an exciting game.

The UCLA Bruins defeated the University of Texas Longhorns on Apr. 3 with a score of 51-44, giving them a ticket to the championship. Additionally, USC beat the University of Connecticut (UConn) on the same day, ending with a score of 62-48. The USC and UConn game concluded with some controversy between the coaching staff, including an argument between head coach Geno Auriemma (UConn) and head coach Dawn Staley (USC). Auriemma was supposedly upset about a missed pre-game handshake and engaged in a verbal altercation after the game. Many arguments across social media platforms arose due to this exchange, and Auriemma later apologized on Apr. 7, saying, "This morning, Dawn Staley and I spoke about our interaction after the game last Friday. I apologized to Dawn, her staff, and her team. I've lost more games in the Final Four than any coach in history. But Friday, I lost something more important. I lost myself."

The Bruins played incredible defense in the championship game, keeping USC to a 26% shooting rate in the first two quarters, including one for eight three-point shooting. They also took a 13-point lead

into halftime. To start the third quarter, they increased the lead by 22 points, which is the largest deficit that USC has faced throughout the whole season. It seemed as if USC had no answers to both UCLA's offense and defense. According to the ESPN broadcast, UCLA outscored USC by 16 points in the third quarter, which happened to be the largest scoring margin of any quarter in a women's title-game history. Last year, the USC Gamecocks also lost to UConn with a score of 82-59. For the second year in a row, the team has faced a blowout in its final game of the season.

UCLA concluded their season with an outstanding overall record of 37-1, only losing once to Texas in late November of 2025. The Gamecocks ended the season with a record of 36-4. After the final game, head coach of the Bruins, Cori Close, explained, "It's beyond my wildest dreams. But it's meaningful because of the people I've gotten to share it with. It's all about the heart. And it would be shallow without an amazing village and incredible people that are important to me my whole life." It is apparent that the UCLA Bruins were able to put up a compelling fight from the start of the game and were able to make history.

(Sources: CNN, ESPN)

## Storm begins its season strong

by **Isabella Langner**

Center Editor

After months of preparation and anticipation, the newest women's tackle football team, the Golden State Storm, began their inaugural season. On Mar. 28, the team played the San Diego Rebellion at Laney Field at 7 PM. The stands were packed with people, gathering about 2,500 fans.

In previous years, the Rebellion has consistently finished among the top of their league, forcing the Storm to face a difficult start to their season. After winning the coin toss, the Storm deferred to the Rebellion for the first half's kickoff. Although the Storm had a difficult time scoring, their defense performed impressively, with many tackles and recovered fumbles. The score was 0-23 with the Rebellion in the lead going into halftime.



SET HUT: The Golden State Storm prepares for the next play.

During the 30-minute intermission, the audience watched four youth club flag football teams compete on the field. Lady Mayans Elite played Marin Heat on one half, while Endzone Elite versed West Coast Blitz played the other. Additionally, there were numerous games and activities for kids, including cornhole, face painting, and blow-up field goals. Food trucks and drink stands set up tents for fans to enjoy parallel to the merch stand, much of which sold out by the end of the game.

Co-owner Tony Lynn made an appearance at the game. He has been a part of the Storm's executive team since June of 2025. Regarding the size of the

turnout, Lynn shared, "It feels great. It's been several months of us trying, and it's great to see that all the effort has been rewarded with the participation of the community." The Storm has attended many community events, reached out to various youth teams, and posted content across several social media platforms to spread awareness about the new team.

On Saturday, Apr. 4, the Golden State Storm played on Laney Field and rematched with Las Vegas Silver Stars, winning 31-2. This game had another notable turnout and a dance performance by TURFinc at halftime. The following weekend, the Storm traveled north to play the Seattle Majestics and won 23-18, bringing their overall record to 2-1. The team's upcoming games include Apr. 25 away against the San Diego Rebellion, May 2 at home against the Oregon Ravens, and May 16 away against the Los Angeles Legends.

In total, the Storm has 31 points, averaging 15.5 per game. Offensively, they have a total yardage of 288, with 125 rush yards and 163 pass yards. Leilani Caamal holds first place on their statistical sheet for both tackles and sacks, proving to be a valuable asset to the Storm's defense. Dorothy Mao also stands out as she appears in almost every statistical category.

The Golden State Storm is off to a promising start, with impressive scores and engaging games for all to enjoy.

(Source: Golden State Storm)



photos/I. Langner

TACKLE: The team works on defensive skills for the next game.

## LG tennis remains victorious

by **Kayla Mitchell**

Public Relations Manager

As the spring tennis season moves forward, the Los Gatos Boys' Varsity Team is building an impressive record. The team currently holds the second spot in the league's rankings with an overall 5-2 record against tough opponents. After winning consecutive league matches over the past few weeks and showcasing an impressive performance in the Silicon Valley Classic tournament, the varsity tennis team is becoming a dominant force this season. Senior **Oliver Nigen** commented, "We hope to build off our performance in the tournament and carry that momentum into CCS."

To gain experience before important tournaments at the end of the season, the varsity tennis team filled its schedule with non-league matches in addition to its weekly league match schedule. In the third match of the season, Los Gatos dominated Wilcox High School, winning 7-0. The following non-league match against Leigh High School showed the importance of competing against a variety of difficult opponents, as the Wildcats narrowly won the match 4-3. Commenting on their participation in non-league matches this season, Coach **Justin Stenger** shared, "I like giving the team the opportunity to compete in a low-stakes environment when there is no pressure, and they can play freely. These matches are a good chance for the players to practice what we work on in our practices and have fun together on the court."

Continuing competition in league matches, Los Gatos easily defeated league rivals Santa Clara High School and Milpitas High School with scores of 7-0 in both matches. While the Wildcats are an exceptional team this year, the DeAnza league holds some of the area's highest level tennis teams. Los Gatos suffered its first loss against Palo Alto High School. The boys fought hard throughout the lineup, but in the end, narrowly lost the match 3-4. Mountain View High School also proved a difficult opponent this year, defeating the Wildcats 5-2.



K. Mitchell

SWING: Senior **Ethan Beale** gets ready to receive a serve.

For additional matches this season, Boys' Varsity competed in the Silicon Valley Classic, an annual non-league tournament. The tournament is a great opportunity for the varsity team to face teams they wouldn't see in the normal season. In the first round, the LGHS team played Bishop O' Dowd High School and defeated its new opponent in a swift 7-0 victory. The second round matchup held a tougher opponent, Los Altos High School, but the LG boys beat out the Eagles in a tight 4-3 match. The semifinal matchup between Los Gatos and St. Ignatius High School posed another challenging battle for the Wildcats, but again the varsity team pulled out an exciting 4-3 win. In the final of the tournament, Harker proved to be a formidable opponent, defeating LG with a final score of 4-3.

Placing second in the Silicon Valley Classic and earning a non-official record of 8-3 overall, the Los Gatos boys are soaring towards achieving their goals this season. After a brief rest during spring break, the varsity team is back in action and ready to continue competing.

(Source: High School On Si)



courtesy/E. Beale

SMILE: Teammates celebrate after a well-deserved victory.

## LGHS Swim and Dive pushes towards its season finale

by **Gowri Sunil**

News Editor

As the LGHS swim and dive teams approach their upcoming league and Central Coast Section (CCS) meets, they are racing through the final stretch of their season.

Entering their second month of competition, the Wildcats faced strong teams, including Palo Alto High School on Mar. 27. Despite the tough loss across all teams, the swimmers, coaches, and families enjoyed the traditional senior night on the same day. It was a night



HIGH FIVE: Los Gatos player congratulates their opponent after a tough relay.

to celebrate the graduating class, with touching speeches from underclassmen honoring their teammates' journeys and impact. The dive team had their meet against Mountain View on Apr. 3, where LGHS placed first in all divisions. Senior **Ellie Murnin** and junior **Adrián Vieyra** both earned their CCS cuts. Having lost no motivation, the swim teams strongly competed against Homestead High School on Apr. 2, where both girls' teams succeeded in victories of over 20 points, while the boys fell to a strong Homestead team.

Reflecting on the ongoing dive season, sophomore **Bert Wolfe** is excited about the progress he and the team have made so far. Though he could not participate last season, Wolfe is all geared up for this year's league meet, sharing, "I'm excited to show off my new dives and the dives I've been improving this season." Wolfe also highlighted the close connections that he built with his team, including late-night board games, snacks, and deep chats. He adds that the team "has a community and league, like no other, that's extremely welcoming and supportive. Many of us are very close with divers on other teams, and our own team is very tight-knit, so it feels like one big diving family."

Sophomore **Jenny Serhienko** emphasized a similar sense of close-knit community on the swim team. Having initially joined for the physical and mental benefits, she was pleased to make lasting friendships through the demanding practices, meets, weekly pasta feeds, and fun bus rides. Additionally, she noted the immense support during races that have helped push her through tough moments; as she recalled, "times where I've been in a hard race and hearing my teammates yelling 'go!' helped me persevere and truly give it my all."

Senior and captain of the swim team, **Brooke Cannan**, noted the team's continued improvement both in and out of the pool. She shared that "the best part of the season is hanging out with everyone at practices and meets, as we all continue to get faster, but also growing our friendships." Now in her final year competing as a Wildcat, Cannan expressed how much she will miss the team after graduating, stating that the "team, coaches, and community that make you feel really welcome." She added, "I'm also gonna miss the daily practices that are sometimes hard to get in the water for but always feel great."

As the spring season progresses towards the more significant competitions, the LGHS swim and dive teams continue training hard to end their season strong.



photos/courtesy B. Roos

DIVE: Sophomore **Ellie Chang** enters the water with intentions of finishing first.

# Los Gatos track team competes in Arcadia Invitational

by Atharava Pandey  
Sports Editor

As the Los Gatos track and field transitions to a critical postseason, athletes are continuing to reach new personal milestones, challenge school records, and maintain an impressive record in the Central Coast Championship (CCS) standings. With state championships just a month away, the track and field team is ready to cap off an outstanding season.

Reflecting on the year, varsity sprinter, junior **Max Clarke** elaborated, "The season has gone well so far. The camaraderie is really amazing, and I think we all push each other to be the best we can be." Because track is both an individual and a team sport, it is critical to have encouraging peers. The emphasis of team spirit has prevailed



RUN HARD: Sophomore **Sam Schwabe** leads the heat in the 200-meter race.

throughout the season. The 4x400 meter relay team, consisting of senior **Kai Jordan**, senior **Hayden Benjamin**, junior **Han Tang**, and junior **Nolan Hochleutner** ran a blistering time of 3:22:41 on Mar. 31 against Gunn High School. The four worked together and scored crucial points for Los Gatos.

Sharing his perspective on a different side of the track, varsity hurdler, junior **Lachlan Kanter** said, "I would describe my season as messy, but now it is starting to get back on track...in all, I have gotten used to it and adapted." Kanter has worked extremely hard on his form and consistently improved the rhythm required to clear the hurdle. He looks forward to continuing to run fast times as the season comes to a close.

The girls' team has had a dominant year, spearheaded by extraordinary athletes in every aspect of track and field. Senior **Kaylee Cross** holds some of the fastest times in CCS, with a 24.56 in the 200-meter race and a 54.37 in the 400-meter race, a school record. In terms of longer distances, senior **Ella Crites** and junior **Elise Greenstreet** have done well in the 800-meter race, while junior **Piper Pyle** and sophomore **Kiley Horwitz** have impressive times in the mile. Overall, the girls' team has emerged as a strong contender for the CCS title.

The team also attended the Arcadia Invitational on Apr. 10 and Apr. 11, one of the premier track meets in California. The meet featured many standout athletes from Los Gatos. Highlights included the Girls' 1600 sprint medley relay (SMR) team finishing third in the Invitational Division and the Boys' SMR team finishing fifth in the Invitational



POSE UP: Boys' track team members stand proud after another successful meet.

Division. This meet demonstrated that the Wildcats could compete on par with teams throughout California and the country, something which will give the team confidence as the season reaches its end.

The LG track and field team has had a remarkable year and looks forward to finishing the season strong. Make sure to keep supporting the team as they compete at De Anza League Trials at Milpitas High School on Apr. 28 and League Finals on Apr. 30. (Source: Athletic.net)

## Badminton trains for finals

by Siyona Singhal  
Humor Editor

As the spring season unfolds, the LGHS badminton team is building on its initial skills and fostering an environment of determination, teamwork, and pride.

At the center of the team's leadership is one of its captains, senior **Andy Zhou**, whose commitment, skill, and ability to motivate others have played a key role in shaping the team's success. Zhou elaborated, "Leading the team that I've been on for three years now is an amazing opportunity that the coaches have given me. I love connecting with all my teammates and making sure everyone's noticed, and playing." As captain, Zhou has adapted to his new role. He has to "manage and teach a lot. I have to be more hands-on with a bunch of my teammates." Last year, Zhou was more focused on himself as a player, but now he feels the responsibility of helping his teammates as well. By the end of the season, Zhou hopes to see "all my teammates improve at their game. And I want to make sure that everyone's friends, and that everyone's included, because we're one big team." To



S. Singhal

SMASH: JV 1 Mixed Doubles prepares to win the next point.

reach this goal, Zhou makes sure to talk to people individually, so he gets to know every player and can bring the team together. Zhou's personal goal is to be a role model to his teammates, so when he graduates, other team members will keep up the same energy and community. He explained, "I try to be carefree and easygoing. I think that brings a lot of the atmosphere of the team. I just try to be the best person I can and show that you can do whatever you want, and if you want it, you can go for it."

Reflecting on his first season, freshman **Benjamin Li** offered insight into his experience. Though Li played for a year before joining the team, he still had little competitive experience, making him feel hesitant initially: "I felt slightly intimidated at first because I didn't know people were this good, but then afterwards, I just realized it's a good community." Li enjoys playing doubles because he and his partner are very coordinated and have unrivaled chemistry, leading to many victories. This year, Li is focusing on improving his skills by going to every practice, attending tournaments, and watching upperclassmen play. Li advised students who want to join the team: "Your current skill does not affect how you're gonna play, because in the future, this team will actually help you improve a lot."

Offering a seasoned perspective, junior **Adelaide Davis** reflected on her experiences during her third year on the team. Davis currently plays doubles. She hopes to work on her communication with her partner and is attempting this by discussing strategy before and during every match. She looks forward to league and is enjoying the new players on the team, mentioning that they have a lot of potential.

As the team moves into the end of their season, they hold a 7-3 record, beating talented opponents and pulling through close matches with teams including Santa Clara High School. Overall, the LGHS badminton team continues to work hard and foster a great community!

## Boys' golf season stays strong

by Noah Gloege  
World Editor

The Los Gatos High School Boys' Golf season is well underway, with the team having played against some of the best competition in the area. The final game took place on Apr. 23, with the league final taking place on Apr. 28 at the Santa Teresa Golf Course. The team has been on an impressive run this year, winning six matches and losing three, placing third in the league.

Los Gatos High School social studies teacher **Dave Denight** has led the golf program for seven years, earning many honors. He helped win the girls' league championship in 2022 and the boys' league finals in 2023. Mr. Denight reflected, "Everyone has their off days. The great thing about golf that keeps people loving the game is that everyone has great days as well, when nothing seems to go wrong, and to focus on those positive days." He also emphasized his hopes and goals the team has this year and how their teamwork has improved, sharing that "the team has excellent commitment and camaraderie. They are all responsible and realize it is a team effort, persistently showing empathy towards each other. We hope to continue to be competitive and do well in the league championship as well as CCS."

Over the last couple of weeks, the team has been honing its skills on the green to improve its scores. While many golfers are returning, some have just started playing. Junior **Zachary Pang** shares some insights on the last couple of rounds. Pang described his experience thus far as "super fun and competitive, we've been making sure to keep each other on our toes." He explained how he stays calm during the rounds: "I tell myself to breathe and restart every shot, good or bad." Golf is one of

the most dynamic sports in terms of mentality and requires constant shifts; a strong mental game is most important.

Many people do not realize how many people actually play golf at Los Gatos, as the team roster changes drastically each year. Long time golfer and junior **Cole Dunstan** commented: "Something I didn't realize about high school golf was the number of kids that actually play golf at our school. There are more people than I thought would play, especially this year." Golf has become more popular over the years, and the team is starting to see better numbers. Dunstan added that the course schedule they have faced has been difficult, with the Saratoga Country Club being the most challenging, as it "is really tight and has pretty drastic elevation changes," and that the greens are "fast and tricky, which makes it difficult to score well."

With the season coming to a close, the boys' golf team has worked towards getting better and the improvements have shown. As the 2024 league winners and 2023 Santa Clara Valley Athletic League league tournament winners, the team has a lot to be excited about heading into the end of the season.



courtesy E. Hamilton

FORE: Senior **Tyler Purcell** winds up his 250-meter drive.

# Los Gatos Boys' Baseball aims to place first in CCS

by Lydia Liu  
Public Relations Manager

As the LGHS baseball program approaches the final stretch of its season, both the varsity and JV teams are thriving. Sitting at 7-0 in the league, the Wildcats have built something worth paying attention to, and the players will tell you the record is only part of the story. That sense of unity was on full display earlier this season when the team traveled to Nashville, an experience that brought the group closer off the field and carried over into stronger communication, trust, and performance on the field.



LOCKED IN: Boys' varsity makes hearts with their hands to salute a tough win.

JV has faced a rigorous run of games in the Santa Clara Valley Athletic League (SCVAL) El Camino Division, especially against strong non-league Bay Area teams like Serra. However, even in tight games, the group has remained composed and resilient, often leaning on the familiarity they have built over years of playing together.

JV sophomore infielder **Dexter Torres** pointed to that sense of connection as a defining part of the group. Torres emphasized that the team's bond goes far beyond just playing baseball together: "What makes the team special is definitely our brotherhood; we have known each other since elementary school." Even in difficult moments, he said the group's mentality has stayed consistent. "My mindset is to leave it all out on the field and do everything I personally can to win."

Across the JV roster, the emphasis has been less on individual performance and more on staying mentally steady throughout games. Sophomore **Hank Lee** described that approach as simple but important when momentum shifts. "Just take a deep breath, stay focused, and try not to overthink anything," Lee said. On handling challenges, he emphasized composure and support: "Just cheer on your teammates and try not to act any differently than you would if you were winning. Keep the team morale up."

On the varsity side, the team's growth has been just as much about chemistry as it has been about results. A big part of the team's success has come from how well they've learned to trust each other, reinforced by coaching that emphasizes unity and shared duty. Varsity outfielder, junior **Sebastian Schaffer**, a consistent presence in the lineup, described that environment as a key part of the team's success. As unity grows, Schaffer credited the coaches for building cohesion: "The

highlighted how much he enjoys showing up every day: "The season is really fun, and all of us are close to each other. We hang out a lot, and we also win a lot of games, so overall it is really enjoyable."

As the season winds down, both teams remain focused on finishing strong. Varsity has its sights set on a deep push into the Central Coast Section (CCS), while JV hopes to take its collective growth to the next level. Together, the program's results and players' culture create a team, not only winning games but also building a foundation that will most likely carry forward well beyond the school year.



photos courtesy J. Natividad

BANG: Los Gatos Varsity Baseball celebrates after another win in League.



# SPORTS

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## Los Gatos lacrosse remains at the top of league standings

by Lila Zamansky  
Media Production Editor

With a strong defense, swift midfielders, and a fierce attack, the LGHS lacrosse teams are off to a solid start to their 2026 spring season. The Cats are looking to re-establish their record-breaking results: both teams reached the Central Coast Section (CCS) quarter-finals in 2025 by playing strategically, practicing hard, and fostering a unified community.

The Boys' Varsity team holds first place in their league with an impressive 5-0 record. The team has easily defeated competitive schools such as Stevenson High School (9-2), Menlo-Atherton High School (9-5), and Aptos High School (14-1) by utilizing smart techniques and game play. The boys are getting ready for the upcoming games: once again, against Stevenson, as well as Palo Alto. Despite tough competition, the team is determined to finish in first place and follow it up by dominating CCS.

Girls' Varsity has played against intense competition, but still secured well-deserved victories. The season is now in full swing, with the girls holding a 5-2 record, beating Wilcox High School (14-4), Mountain View High School (15-8), and Los Altos High School (18-14). In a game against Los Altos, senior **Kirra Bannon**, freshman **Eleonora Tremblay**, and junior **Shyla Werdebaugh** scored three goals each.

Yet, the girls have also faced some tough losses, including games against Menlo Atherton (10-16) and Gunn High School (4-7). However, in the Cats' second game against Gunn on Apr. 15, the girls used their previous loss to fuel their passion to win and ultimately came out on top, beating them 10-8, with junior **Darcy Armstrong** scoring a key goal. Despite these previous losses at the beginning of the season, the team is optimistic about the upcoming games against Burlingame High School and Palo Alto High School. Team captain and senior **Leighton Ozawa** noted, "As a team, the girls need to work on ground balls because that's going to be a factor that changes the outcome of the game. We've spent a lot of time working on these at practice. It has definitely been paying off because our game against Stevenson looked really good."

Throughout the season, regardless of result, the lacrosse program's team dynamic and community have never failed to have an upbeat attitude. Senior **Aubrey Correia** elaborated, "The team chemistry is really supportive and connected. Everyone pushes and cheers each other on for each pass and shot they take. I would say that we have a lot of trust in each other, which makes a big difference during games."

LGHS lacrosse is flourishing, and with both teams training hard, playing technically, and supporting one another, they will undoubtedly dominate this season. Both teams will be playing Palo Alto in the

coming weeks on Helm Field, with the girls playing on Apr. 27 and the boys playing on May 5. Be sure to come out, support, and cheer our lacrosse teams on to victory.



FIGHT ON: The girls' lacrosse team gears up for their game against strong rival.

## POM: Kiana Koechlin prepares to swim at Georgetown

by Megan Saul and Gowri Sunil  
Editor-in-Chief and News Editor

Swim star senior **Kiana Koechlin** is finishing her final season at LGHS strong while gearing up to begin her Division 1 athletic career at Georgetown University. As a leader of LGHS's team and local club, Quicksilver Swimming, she has positively influenced her teammates' experiences while helping drive the team's success.

First discovering swimming at age six, Koechlin began racing competitively when she turned ten. Though she loves the sport now, Koechlin noted that it wasn't always this way. Following the COVID pandemic, she recalled that her swimming "came to a pause for a second, I hated

it, and I dreaded going to practice." Upon returning to the pool after the COVID shutdowns, Koechlin found her passion once again, attributing her discipline to the sport.

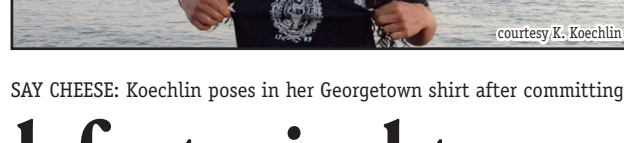
Currently, she holds LGHS records in the 200 and 400-yard freestyle relays, as well as the 100-yard breaststroke, a stroke she specializes in. Though she's achieved significant success, Koechlin points out the intense mental side of swimming. She described swimming as "the most rewarding thing ever," but she also emphasized the importance of maintaining a positive mindset when facing tough moments in the sport.

Throughout her swimming career, Koechlin has relied heavily on her support system, including her mom, whom she describes as her biggest supporter. Alongside her mother, Koechlin's coach from Quicksilver, Carrie Mox, has been a huge mentor for her, as Koechlin enthused: "[Carrie has] seen me through all of my ups and downs. And she's also not only a coach, but one of my best friends."

Koechlin began the recruiting process during the summer after her sophomore year. While successful, she explained how "it doesn't really have anything to do with your worth. You get a bunch of rejections and acceptances, kind of like regular college admissions." Ultimately landing on Georgetown, Koechlin knew it was where she wanted to spend her next four years for many reasons, including its academic and athletic prestige. She intends to major in economics and is particularly interested in behavioral economics.

During spring break, Koechlin visited Georgetown to spend time with her future teammates. She shared, "Before visiting, I was honestly really nervous about moving away because D.C. is so far, but after I had met my teammates and my classmates, I'm so relieved and grateful to have met a group of people so diverse and enjoyable to be with." She continued, "It already feels like we're family. I feel like I'm part of something so much bigger than myself, and I already know these people are going to push me to be the greatest version of myself and better, inside and outside of the pool."

Koechlin's talent in the pool is comparable to her kindness in conversation. These qualities are sure to take her far at Georgetown next year and beyond.



SAY CHEESE: Koechlin poses in her Georgetown shirt after committing.

## LGRC competes fearlessly

by Julia Valencia  
Opinion Editor

At Lexington Reservoir, Los Gatos Rowing Club (LGRC) athletes and coaches alike are gearing up for the most intense weeks of their spring season. After eight months of training, millions of meters rowed, and countless hard-fought races, LGRC is approaching its final days before the Southwest Youth Championships (SYC), the qualifier for Youth National Championships (YNC) in Sarasota, Florida.



CHAMPIONS: The boys' rowing team podiums after a race.

In March, LGRC traveled to Redwood City to compete in a dual regatta with Redwood Scullers, arguably its strongest competitor for sculling on the West Coast. Over the weekend, both the LGRC men and women put up fast times, further justifying their title as one of the premier clubs for youth rowing.

LGRC also made an appearance at the more recent and highly competitive San Diego Crew Classic (SDCC). With more than four thousand athletes and 126 clubs, SDCC is considered the largest spring regatta in the United States. LGRC sent 87 athletes across 16 boats to San Diego, and 21 took home gold medals across four events. The Women's Varsity Quad, the Men's Varsity Quad, and the Men's Second Varsity Quad, all defended their titles from last year, while the Men's Under 16 Eight had an exciting victory with a close finish to the favored Marin Rowing Association. The Women's Youth Varsity Quad, with senior **Jenna Yoder** and sophomore **Chloe Stopford**, won with a commanding lead over the rest of the field, garnering a six-second margin on second-place Redwood Scullers. Both the Men's Varsity Quad, with seniors **Cameron Brown** and **Jasper Powell**, and Second Varsity Quad, with senior **Milton O'Brien** and sophomore **Matthew Willey**, won by at least half a boat length in their final races.

The Women's Second Varsity Quad, with junior **Sophia Juarez**, the Under 17 Quad, with sophomores **Ada Dawson** and **Norah Toet**, and the Under 16 Quad, with freshmen **Makayla Kelley** and **Annette Lee**, all finished in second place. With very close times to the winners, these boats are looking forward to racing again at SYC.

At the beginning of May, youth rowing clubs from Arizona, California, Colorado, New Mexico, Hawaii, Nevada, and Utah will travel to Lake Natoma in Sacramento to race at SYC. Over seventeen hundred athletes will come together to compete for the same coveted spots that will send their crew to YNC for the chance to compete for a national title. Last year, LGRC sent 66 athletes to Sarasota, where six boats placed in the top three for the nation, three of which brought back national titles.

As LGRC ramps up its training in preparation for SYC and YNC, they remain committed to bringing home medals, with the goal of "national champion" in its sights. Be sure to follow along as these rowers bring their season to a close. (Sources: HereNow, Regatta Central, San Diego Crew Classic)

## Softball defeats rival teams

by Abby Coven  
News Editor

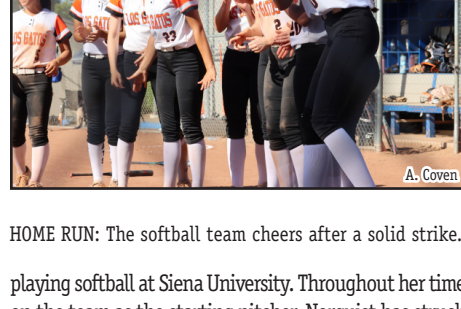
Halfway through the season, the LGHS Girls' Varsity Softball Team continues to dominate with a 16-1 record.

The Wildcats beat Milpitas High School on Apr. 1 with a score of 13-2. Junior **Ava Norquist** hit two home runs and struck out six batters over four innings, alongside senior **Grace Tucker**, a Dominican University of California commit, who had three runs batted in (RBIs), two runs, and one double. Junior **Cate Zeman** stole two bases, scored two runs, and had one RBI. The girls' formidable performance demonstrated their dominance.

In their game against Wilcox High School on Apr. 3, the team fell behind 3-0 in the first inning, but came back strong and won handily 13-5. Sophomore and third baseman **Alyshia LaPlante** shared, "I love that our team is so resilient. We fight through all seven innings of the game, no matter what happens. Even when other teams score, our captains encourage everyone to 'reset' and not let it get in our heads." Senior **Olivia Sickels** hit a home run and has nine doubles so far this season.

At the beginning of spring break, LGHS hosted an exhilarating weekend tournament. Through an impressive 16-2 win over Santa Teresa High School, they secured the gold division. During the semi-final match against Homestead, junior **Danica DeSantis** pitched seven innings, surrendering only two runs and leading the team to victory.

In addition to consistently performing at the top of their league, the Wildcats are raking in outstanding individual victories as well. For the past two years, the De Anza League has awarded Norquist the Most Valuable Player award. This year, she committed to



HOME RUN: The softball team cheers after a solid strike.

playing softball at Siena University. Throughout her time on the team as the starting pitcher, Norquist has struck out over 60 opponents so far and has an earned run average (ERA) of zero in five games and an ERA of 1.92 for the season. Tucker leads the team with 27 runs and 32 hits. Sickles leads the team in stolen bases with six, along with senior **Tessa Lilienstein**, who has five. Even more impressive is how well the Wildcats are performing in spite of losing key players, senior **Sophia Krish** and sophomore **Monika Leaverton**, to pre-season injuries.

Head Coach **Randy Frey** and Assistant Coach **Jim Johnson** hope to lead the Wildcats to another championship. "Both coaches clearly love their job," LaPlante enthused. "They really care about us and want us to be the best we can be as a team, as players, and as individuals."

The Wildcats beat Saratoga High School on Apr. 15 with a score of 12-2. On Apr. 17, the team won their game against Los Altos High School 11-3 on Apr. 17. With passionate coaches, inspiring captains, an incredible team bond, and a winning 5-0 in league play, this 25-26 Girls' Varsity Team is really tagging all the bases.