

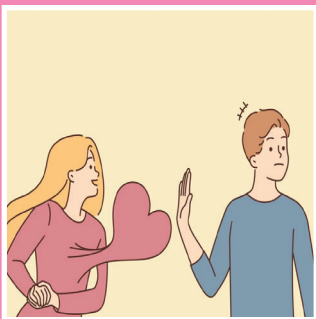
The PLATINUM PREVIEW

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Van Gaale Honored with “Teacher of the Year”

Emilio Medrano '24
Staff Writer

The “Teacher of the Year” award is an important achievement given out to one teacher on campus annually. This year, the teacher recognized for forming strong connections with their students and putting in an impressive amount of effort towards their learning this year was Mrs. Justine Van Gaale, who teaches Algebra 1 and Advanced Placement (AP) Precalculus and is the math specialist for the school. Van Gaale continuously puts forth effort into making her classroom environment organized and engaging so that students can further benefit from the opportunities provided.

Van Gaale has demonstrated that she earned this award in the way she runs her classroom. “I spend a substantial amount of time lesson planning and reflecting on how lessons go so I can provide opportunities for students to collaborate, have different ideas, and share them,” she said. By reflecting on how lessons go, she further improves her lessons, allowing her to provide more benefit to the students’ education. Van Gaale also does a great job of getting along with her co-workers and building a strong work



Credit: Emilio Medrano

Van Gaale is hard at work teaching her students the complexities of PreCalculus, preparing them for their future math journey.

relationship with them, creating a strong hard working environment. AP Calculus AB Teacher Jake Paino, one of her well trusted co-workers, says, “She’s been a great co worker ... we did Algebra 2 curriculum together for many years ... she created it and she’s just such a hard worker and

really cares for her students ... it’s good she’s recognized for all her hard work.” Her co-workers recognize the hardworking teacher that she is and why she’s earned teacher of the year.

Since she is the math specialist for the school, she is able to reflect and improve her lessons. Van Gaale often travels between different schools and the district office to further knowledge through discussions about the math curriculum. The 2023-2024 school year will mark the first year of AP Precalculus being offered on campus, and it has been a struggle for many students. Van Gaale has taken on the responsibility of teaching AP Precalculus and has put a lot of effort into making it easier for students to grasp difficult concepts. Van Gaale said, “We don’t have a book that fits the college board or AP criteria so we had to do a lot as a professional learning community to go through and find resources that fit for students’ learning.” She continued, “It was a lot of from scratch but it was unique as I can take students’ feedback to find what’s beneficial, so the course itself has shifted and grown from

what students have expressed.” With a difficult curriculum at hand Van Gaale does a great job keeping her class on track and engaged.

An important aspect of Van Gaale’s teaching is the connections that she establishes with her students. Van Gaale prioritizes staying organized for herself and her students so that her classroom system runs as smoothly as it can. She said, “Because of how organized the classroom is and planned out, it gives me time to walk around and ask questions, check where students are at, and notice if a student needs extra help ... I would say by spending time making an organized system, I have more time to build a connection with the students.” Van Gaale is one of the hardest-working teachers on campus, providing a lot of support to students. Math can be a difficult subject, but the time she puts into her lessons, connecting with students, and furthering her knowledge of the curriculum impacts the students’ learning. The effort that Van Gaale puts into her teaching shows why she is “Teacher of the Year.”



Credit: Van Gaale

Van Gaale enjoys spending quality time with her family members outside of school.

Key Takeaways From the Latest WASC Report

Katherine Ivey '26
School News Editor

The Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) travels the state to accredit schools from the elementary to the college level. By accrediting schools, WASC ensures that students receive a high level of education and feel safe and taken care of. These accreditations happen on average in a six-year cycle. Starting on January 21 and ending on January 24, Chaparral hosted a group of WASC volunteers, whose findings will help improve the educational atmosphere.

One of WASC’s main goals is to find areas where schools flourish, and Chaparral has many places of strength. The most substantial area, however, revolves around students’ positivity and kindness. “[The] students are fantastic, and there are so many activities for students on this campus to get involved in,” noted 17-time WASC accreditor Brett O’Connor. “[I saw] how much the staff really cares about one another, and [a] vast majority really care about the kids.” Mrs.

Susan Myers agreed, saying, “One of the things [the WASC members] mentioned many, many, many times throughout was how much they like the students ... and that they thought the students were outstanding.” Another area of strength concerns the Career Technical Education (CTE) courses. Some of the CTE offered include Video Media Arts, Patient Care, Computer Programming and Software Development, and more. These multi-year educational pathways and the plentiful number of Advanced Placement courses help strengthen students’ opportunities for vocational education. O’Connor commented that seeing, “the diverse options ... with CTE courses [and] with AP courses,” was one of his favorite aspects of the visit.

While the school has many strengths, there is always room for improvement. One area that needs refining is the delivery of the four Cs. “Everyone knows what the P.R.I.D.E. acronym is now ... [but there] are [also] school-wide learning outcomes that we want students to be able to do,” Myers expressed. “[These] are the four C’s, which are communication, collaboration, creativity, and critical thinking ... We don’t do as good of a

job communicating what those are to students ... So that’s one of the areas where we’re doing, but do students know that we’re doing that.” Additionally, the post-COVID-19 educational environment has brought about new challenges schools must face. “[In] all the schools I’ve been to ... post COVID, students are being challenged with more mental health issues, more anxiety,” O’Connor described. Staff members have created an action plan to address these areas and others.

The final WASC report will be released in April. From there, Chaparral will continue to adapt and grow to give its students a safe place to live and grow academically, socially, and personally. “[My] favorite moment was when I walked around at lunch ... and so many teachers had their doors open, and kids were eating,” O’Connor said. “That’s the moment I’m going to remember because that showed me that a teacher [was] willing to give up their thirty minutes of lunch and students feeling like [school] is a safe place to be ... Students better feel loved and cared for and accepted, and if you don’t have that, it doesn’t matter how good your teaching is.”

PRINCIPAL’S MESSAGE



Principal Tina Miller

Pumas,

Second semester is moving along quickly. We hope that you enjoyed Club Rush and found a club that sparked your interest or aligned to your passion. Spring sports and performances are just around the corner, and we hope to see all of our Pumas at our upcoming events. We are excited to kick off the month of February celebrating National Counseling Week from Feb. 5 - Feb. 9 and the beginning of Black History Month. Please continue to check out the CHS Instagram page for all upcoming school events this month.

Go Pumas!

CAASPP Testing
Q and A
with Assistant Principal
Dr. Anissa Sequeida

Information Gathered By: Presley Azevedo ‘27

Q: Who is required to participate in CAASPP testing?

A: Every year for high school 11th grade students will participate in the CAASPP test.

Q: What subjects will juniors be tested on?

A: Juniors will be tested on their English language arts, reading and writing. They will be tested on math, and they will be tested on the California science test.

Q: What will students be doing on March 11?

A: The whole school will be on a “Rolling Block Schedule,” So you will meet with periods 1, 2, 3, and 5. Most periods will be about 90 minutes, so while 9th, 10th, and 12th graders are in class, they will be doing regular classwork, while 11th graders are just in their English classes for that week and will be taking the CAASPP test.

Q: Why is the CAASPP important for students?

A: The CAASPP test is important because it helps students know where they are as well as if they are meeting grade-level standards, and preparation for college. It helps us as a school and as a district because it’s something that our community looks at to see how well we are performing, and how well we are preparing our students academically. Colleges often look at those scores too, so if you apply and it comes down to a tied GPA and you are both active in school, colleges will look at those scores to see if you are really ready for college.

Scan here
for
CAASPP Schedule



First-Ever Morp Springs Into Action

Alexia De Leon ‘24
Video Manager

On March 1, 2024, the school will be having its first-ever spring dance, Morp. Morp takes a unique approach by breaking away from the conventional norms of Prom. Since Prom is a formal dance only open to Juniors and Seniors, Morp was created as one last, informal dance that is open to all grade levels. Spring dance committee member, Sophomore Allison Fisher stated, “We knew that everyone works super hard in the second semester and that underclassmen don’t really have anything to look forward to, so we decided that we should have a dance this semester to reward all the students on campus for their hard work.”

From the successful debut of the Puma Pit to the outstanding results of CAASPP testing, this spring event was created as an incentive to celebrate the great achievements that the school has accomplished this past year. The students’ hard work and dedication greatly contributed to the successes of the school, and this spring event was developed as a way to reward them and give them something to look forward to, especially underclassmen. Senior Kate Warner stated, “I am so happy that they are able to include another fun event in the second semester. I always wished as a freshman and sophomore that I could look forward to going to Prom and other fun events, and now the underclassmen get the opportunity.”



Students can buy their MORP tickets for fifteen dollars at the bookkeeper.

This year, the theme of Morp is neon and students are expected to dress accordingly. Morp is meant to be the opposite of Prom, as it is a twist on the well-known school dance, just spelled backwards, and the rules apply as well. Instead of dressing up in formal attire, students dress in casual attire. The idea of Morp originated from the Luau that takes place at the beginning of every school year. The Associated Student Body (ASB) wanted to create an additional dance

for everyone to participate in, regardless of their grade level. “Everyone who helped make this event really wanted it to be inclusive and fun,” spring dance committee member, Freshman Gianna Caponigro, expressed. “Us as a team were bummed that not all grades could attend Prom, so, we decided, why not make a dance the opposite, so everyone can go.”

The dance will take place in the Quad from 8-10 PM. To make Morp even more memorable, the event will feature a variety of activities and treats, including a DJ playing live music, photo booth, free popcorn, and various food and drink vendors. Tickets for Morp are available now and students are encouraged to purchase their tickets early to secure their spots at this event, as for space is limited. As the excitement builds, the school eagerly anticipates the success of its first-ever Morp, confident that it will become a cherished tradition for years to come. Caponigro expressed, “I hope to see lots of people have fun. This is the last school dance that everyone can attend, so I’m so excited. I also hope everyone can be as bright as they can be with neon.”

BSU Celebrates Black History Month

Bethel Albe ‘26
Social Media Manager

Black Student Union (BSU) is a club and community on campus designed to unite students through Black heritage and African American culture. Meetings are held every Friday in the Conference Center or Mrs. Dianne Cox’s room in 517. The club contains diverse and engaging

activities and events to highlight African-American culture. On February 2, the BSU hosted a potluck during lunch to honor the annual month of remembrance. Throughout the month, they are hosting weekly meetings that honor and educate students regarding current events in the Black community. In addition to this, BSU will host its annual ceremony that honors academically inclined Black students as well as students with

BSU’s frequent contributions they anticipate providing throughout the month of February is meaningful to many students on campus, as it provides a comfortable space to express culture. Anderson stated, “The purpose of BSU is to encourage a spirit of unity at CHS and a safe space for black students...We strive to give Black students a place where their achievements are recognized and they can learn more about their history.” This goal holds significant meaning to students on campus as it can be difficult to express cultural pride without certain obstacles. Anderson continued, “The club has faced challenges of students not fully understanding our purpose and what we are about ... we are much stronger than [these obstacles] and we’ve seen an increase in members as well as people open to learning more.”

While BSU is designed to uplift and unite Black students on campus, the club is not exclusive to black students and encourages all to attend meetings and immerse themselves further into African American education. The doors of BSU are always open, especially throughout the month of February, where everyone is given the opportunity to celebrate Black heritage. Anderson stated, “BSU and BHM is not exclusive to just Black students ... everyone is welcome to join our club and even more welcome to stop into our meetings during BHM.” The more students who are active members of the community, the easier it becomes for BSU to pursue their goal of unity on campus. BSU’s celebrations of BHM are intended to reach the masses. Anderson concluded, “BHM is a month to celebrate the joy, triumph, and strength of Black Americans.”



Credit: Dianne Cox

TVUSD BSU members kicked off Black History Month with a meeting with Jane Elliot. activities that ensures Black students on campus maintain a strong and lively community. Part of ensuring this community is celebrating African-American history and achievements. Black History Month (BHM) is an official observance in the U.S. that focuses on remembrance of significant historical figures in the African American Community. To honor this national celebration, BSU provides several the highest GPA. Finally, to spread the word and gain appropriate media traction, BSU will highlight a person that has contributed to BHM each day on the official Instagram account. BSU president and active coordinator of these events, Senior Brooklyn Anderson stated, “I believe these events accurately represent Black History Month. We want as a club for all students on campus to join us and learn more about Black culture and history.”

ASB Hosts Weekly Fun Free Fridays

Presley Azevedo '27
Staff Writer

With all the stresses of school, many students require something to break up the monotony of the typical day-to-day routine. To assist with this, the Associated Student Body (ASB) has come up with a fantastic way to add a new upbeat activity to give the students something to look forward to. These are events called Free Friday, and it is a significant step in the right direction for campus connectivity. Free Friday occurs every Friday afternoon at lunch, with some sort of game or an event that students can participate in. This includes playing music, dancing, pickleball, and many other activities. Freshman Florence Walter, the chair for Free Friday, stated, "It's just so that there [are] more events and for more people to be getting involved with the school, and hopefully so other people can perform." The purpose of these events goes beyond just some games and music, and Walter hopes other people can have the chance to perform. Walter added, "We also want to do more events leading up to that, like having some dance teams perform." Having groups such as the dance teams perform on Free Friday, can give not only an entertaining show for students, but a chance for those teams to show off their outstanding skills. Free Friday is a brand new activity on campus, and even though it is just getting started, it has already been very successful. Free Friday was created last semester with the goal of improving the culture on campus and encouraging participation in school events. Walter explained this goal, stating, "There's more events

because last year there [weren't] as many things to do, and it made it less exciting." With this goal in mind, ASB has set a clear path and idea for what they want to accomplish with this new event, and intend to improve Fridays in the future for all students on campus. With a clear path, they have planned out many events for future Free Fridays, which will include Zumba, karaoke, four

Honestly, people are just scared that people are going to see them or that they are going to embarrass themselves, so I think that we need to get more people that honestly don't care." There are many students on campus who are hesitant to participate in these lunch events, especially if there is not a very large crowd to join in. This hesitation can be especially attributed to the lack of campus



Credit: Ryan Leonhardt

Fuentes teaches a dance exercise class to students and staff during a free fun Friday. square, dance team performances, and much more. With these new activities, ASB hopes to draw in more student involvement and culture in this new student-led event. One of the biggest problems with these events is that participation from students has been relatively low compared to other school-sponsored events. Walter explained, "We've had some events that a lot of people participate and some others do not. events that were put on last year. There were not any weekly events like Free Friday, only major events where most of the school would be, so this is a large step in improving the campus community. Free Fridays give students something special to look forward to, instead of simply being another average day at school. So, for all outgoing students, join Free Fridays, participate in the activities, and welcome anybody scared to join in on the fun during the event.

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NJROTC Illustrates Passion with Continued Winning Titles

Senaya Holloway '27
Staff Writer

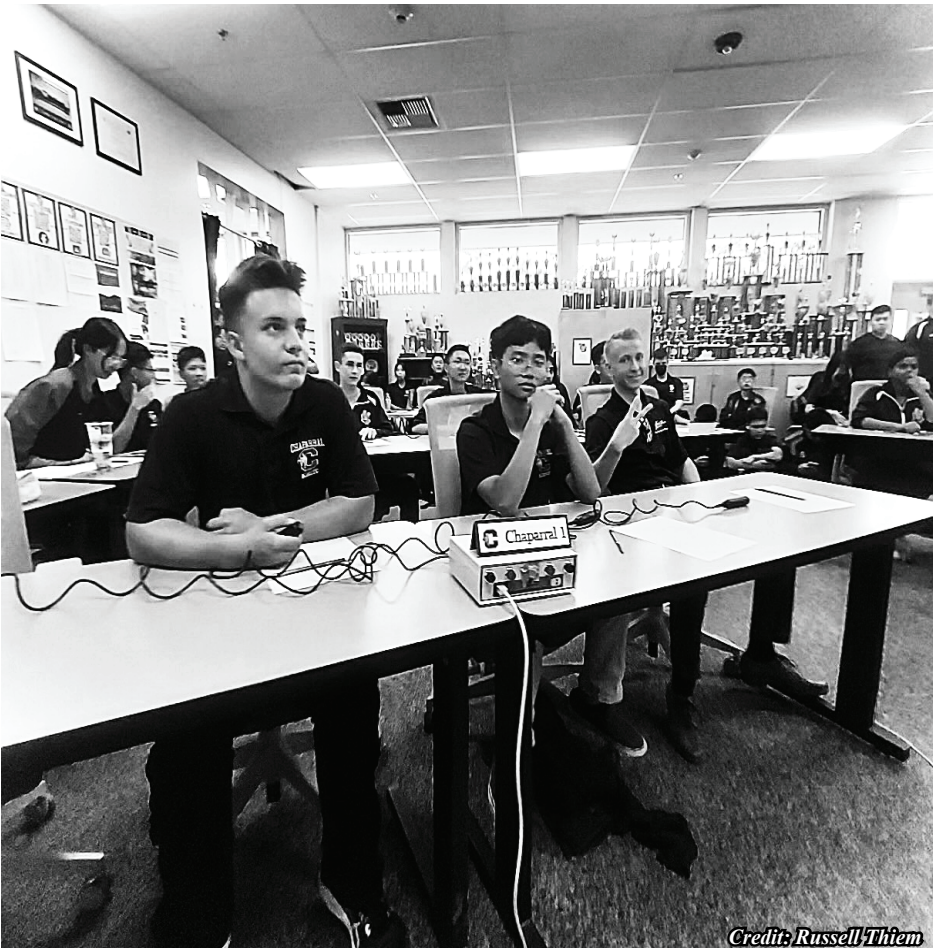
Navy Junior Reserve Officer Training Corp (NJROTC) is a citizen development program dedicated to the growth of students led by instructors First Sergeant Leopoldo Ruiz and Commander Russell Thiem. It is a common misconception that NJROTC is only used as a recruiting tool for military branches, yet the ultimate goal of the program is to create well-rounded members of society. NJROTC values the disciplines of integrity and respect, living by the Navy motto, "Honor, Courage, Commitment" while tying in various



Credit: Russell Thiem

NJROTC field unit brandishing their awarded flag.

aspects of performance arts along with displays of skill and academic excellence. Recently, on January 21, NJROTC won a state level competition in orienteering, qualifying them for nationals, taking place in North Carolina. The premise of the events is that participating members will be placed in an unfamiliar environment and must rely on the tools they are given, like a compass or a map, to find reach different designated points as quickly as possible. However, the game can pose a challenge for many reasons. "They don't even know where they are at, they have to figure [it] out," Ruiz explained. "They take the compass and they have to find these points and get back. Now, the distance on the map could be two miles, but if they get lost, it could be six [or] seven miles." The event requires teamwork and knowledge about the usage of different tools, it also requires perseverance through an endeavor that is seemingly impossible. Due to the nature of this event, their qualification for nationals is an extraordinary accomplishment made by the team and more can be expected in the future. Another competition that will soon take place is one that NJROTC is widely known for, the spinning of the ruffles alongside the marching band. The contest will take place at Santa Ana High School for the state championship on February 10. There is a shared excitement about the event with the possible outcomes of an incredible victory. "One team out of our area, out of all ROTCs in our area, which is about fifty-four high schools, one team will be able to go to nationals in Florida," Ruiz added. The stakes are high and the process to get to nationals will be challenging, mentality will be an important factor of victory. The members of NJROTC have a high drive for success, and there is no doubt that the next level of competition will be taken on with determination. Although NJROTC focuses on many aspects of competition, the general foundation of the program focuses on the morals taught



Credit: Russell Thiem

NJROTC participates in a jeopardy game of Brain Bowl competition and ultimately takes the victory. to students to push them to be better members of society. "The things we try to instill in our cadets are commitment to the community, self respect, devotion to duty. ... A lot of these leadership qualities we want them to take with them," Thiem stated. Preparing students for a life beyond high school requires more than just academic excellence. Responsibility, accountability, and an overall drive to be an important pillar of society are stressed within the curriculum. Provided that the members of NJROTC must display the qualities of a model student academically and socially, the high expectations and standards participants are held to reflect the strong foundation of the program. NJROTC is widely recognized for its work in visual performance, which proves to rank highly within competition, but the success of the overall group comes from every individual living by NJROTC law.

CTE Pathway Builds Pumas into Engineers for Tomorrow

Navin Gopalan '24
Photo Manager

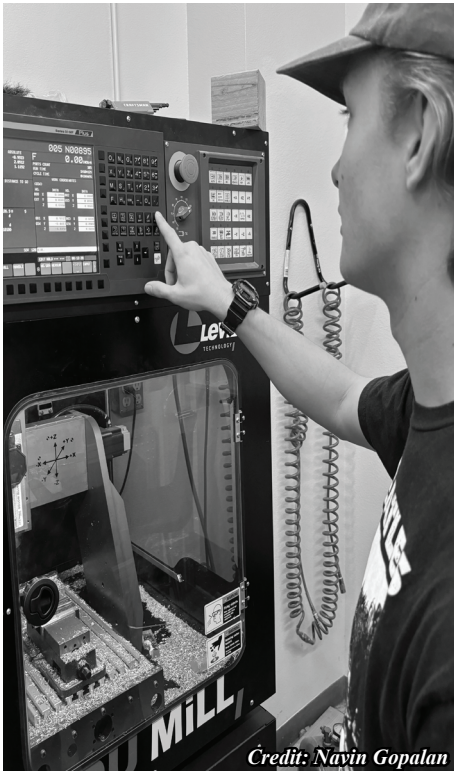
There are many academic courses and pathways offered at Chaparral, each proficient and useful in their own ways. Career Technical Education (CTE) Pathways are particularly useful in that they specifically prepare you for a career field—such as computer science

and engineering. In the case of the latter, the CTE Product Innovation and Design, helmed by Mr. Alexander Spitz, is unique in its ability to teach its students precise skills while allowing creative freedom in many different engineering disciplines. First introduced to the school in 2020, the Production Innovation and Design Pathway has been exchanged between many teachers' hands. Now, under the direction of Spitz, the program

is focusing on its main objective, which is, in Spitz's words, to "give an introduction to engineering and hopefully push some students into that career path." Many of the skills learned in the class are based on the same skills needed to succeed in the manufacturing industry, including the basics of design, using Computer-Aided Design (CAD) software, learning how to use complex machinery like Laser-Jet Cutters, and even just "building with your hands," stated Spitz. "The ability to use your imagination to design different products, solve problems by creating products that provide a solution is the best part of this pathway."

"You really do learn invaluable skills in this class," recalled Senior Noah Flechsig, an alumni of the pathway. "How many people know how to create something in their head, design it in a workspace, and then throw it on a [3-D] Printer, and boom it's there, it's a physical object?" Similarly, current pathway student Junior Sean Nakao stated his appreciation for Spitz and the pathway's courses. "[Mr. Spitz] is very insightful, and helps me with my designs as well as machinery in the workshop. I have learned the basics of 3-D modeling, a variety of different machinery, and have become more proficient in collaborative design with peers. I'm also a great sander," he joked. "[Manufacturing and design] are a skill that not many people know, and it's pretty simple to get into," Flechsig noted. "You think of something, and think I want to make it, and it becomes a reality—and everyone has a different take on what they're making. The Freshmen are making flashlights right now, and each one's different—some are rectangular, some are traditional—they make what they want."

This pathway ultimately teaches fundamentals of engineering and design skills that are definitely needed to succeed in the manufacturing world. Spitz emphasized the benefits to joining the pathway even as



Credit: Navin Gopalan

Noah Flechsig cuts a metal plate with a power mill. a beginner, recalling, "Some students come in with no prior experience, and they leave knowing how to fully design and manufacture products. And then beyond that, it's, you know, your career. Getting into engineering, trying to have a successful [and] meaningful life." Above all, the best part about the Product Innovation and Design Pathway, Flechsig stated, is the skills learned—skills that can be applied to everyday life. "You learn how to problem-solve," he affirmed. "You see something, like 'Oh, we have no doorstop,' so you draw a triangle wedge, and print out a doorstop, and boom it works perfectly. Your imagination's the limit of what you can create."



Credit: Navin Gopalan

Senior Joshua Baxter begins inspecting an old car battery, managing to jump-start it with a copper wire.

NEWS BRIEFS



Tyson Cleveland
January Tireless
Teacher Award Winner



Mia Merida
January Student
of the Month

Computer Bug

As of late, there is a new glitch impacting district-issued Chromebooks. This glitch claims that there has been a change in passwords since the last time a student logged in when this is not the case. To rectify the issue, click "Forgot Old Password" and then select "Continue" when given the warning about local data deletion.

3D Printer in the Library

Ms. Kendi Fraitag has acquired a state-of-the-art 3D printer for the library, and it is open to everyone. It is hoped that this device will encourage innovation, promote Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) education, inspire collaboration, and help students with real-world applications.

Course Selection

Course selection forms are due Monday, February 12 in the office. Additionally, students must fill out the Academic Plan section in Infinite Campus. For more information, please visit the Counseling Office.

Mock Trial

The Mock Trial team has started their competition season and, after months of practice and preperation, currently having a winning record. Both the prosecution and defense teams have claimed victory in the courtroom. As the season continues, the team strives to maintain and improve upon their record.

Puma Pit Wins Nationals:

After finding success in student section regional level. The Puma Pit advanced to nationals, utlmatley taking the title "best student section in the nation."

ATP Students Training in Workforce

Loretta Topp '24
Staff Writer

Down the hall in the 400s wing are three classes with exceptional students who exhibit determination, kindness, and perseverance. These students are a part of the Adult Transition Program (ATP), a special needs program dedicated to helping students with disabilities smoothly transition into the adult world. Within the program, students are diligently working on their social, reading, and real world skills that will further benefit them when they join the workforce.

Their situation and class is very different from the average high school student's day to day. For starters, these students have already graduated from a high school in the Temecula Valley unified School District, and range from ages eighteen to twenty-two. The ATP focuses on teaching the students about real life situations, teaching valuable skills such as budgeting, cooking, filling out applications, and time management, all of which are taught by the three teachers on campus and the student's job coaches. In addition to the skills learned inside the classroom, one of the big aspects of the class are the job sites students are given the opportunity to work at. These job sites, which are visited every Monday and Wednesday, range from restaurants, such as Chick-Fil-A and The Cheesecake Factory, to hotels and home improvement stores. At these job sites, students are able to develop their communication skills and learn the inner workings of a workplace.

The job sites give the special needs students the ability to gain a sense of independence, a feeling many have not had before. Through their jobs, students are encouraged to do their work on their own, whether it be folding napkins,

wiping down the tables, or assisting co-workers. The students work for an hour and fifteen minutes while accompanied by their job coaches. These coaches are with a small group of students for the entire school year, assisting them along the way. The job coaches are just as connected to the students as the teachers are, and are able to see the growth of the student first-hand. Ms. Molly Donth, a first-year job coach, spoke on the most rewarding part of her job, which is, "Just seeing their individualism and as the year has gone on I've seen changes in them, whether that be learning new skills, social skills. They make every day a great experience for them and the others around them."

The teachers, who organize the lesson plans and job site communications, are the ones most impacted by the students. By teaching them life skills, they are able to see

the confidence these students develop throughout the course of the program. One main idea implemented within the program is allowing the students to think for themselves. ATP teacher, Ms. Kelly Ortiz, explained, "We are teaching them to become independent thinkers. Most times, students with special needs are told what to do. We want them to shift that and take a little bit of ownership in their lives." This is one of the prime examples of what the ATP program wishes to accomplish: a better understanding of special needs students and how to fulfill their needs. "There is a lot students can learn from individuals with special needs that they can incorporate into their own lives," Ortiz concluded. "Having the willingness to be open minded, to learn about someone who is different than them, is an important skill for teenagers to have into adulthood."



Credit: Kelly Ortiz

Natalie Villamar, an ATP student, works diligently at her job site, Intazza Coffee Works.



The ideas expressed in the Editorials section do not reflect the views of *The Platinum Press* as a staff, but rather those of the journalist who wrote them.

If readers desire to respond to an editorial, *The Platinum Press* values all opinions and welcomes letters to the editor. Just as *The Platinum Press* respects each individual’s right to a differing opinion, we ask the same of our readers. Each journalist is well within their rights to express their opinion on any given topic, no matter how controversial that topic may be. This is the intent of an editorial, not only to provide journalists with a medium to express an opinion, but to allow the editorial to be a catalyst for further discussion of a given topic.

All letters must be signed and submitted to Mr. Leonhardi in room 413 or left in his mailbox. They will also be accepted via school email at rleonhardi@tvusd.us

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Dangers of A Low Commitment Relationship

Hailey Mera ‘25
Editorials Editor

In the past, dating often followed a more structured and traditional path. Social norm dictated that people became involved with one another with the intent of finding a life partner. Today however, the landscape of dating is characterized by diversity and complexity, such as online dating, casual relationships, and differing gender identities. All of these aspects have reshaped the way people approach romantic connections. The freedom to choose one’s path has brought both liberation and openness, but with everything positive, comes the negative. While dating has expanded vastly in terms of the way different peoples express themselves, it becomes apparent that regardless of this, dating has become far more complicated than it should be.

A prime example is what is commonly referred to as “situationship.” Essentially, a situationship involves people who do not want to commit to each other, but still partake in activities any typical couple would. At first glance, situationships might seem like an efficient middle for those hesitant to fully commit, or those simply enjoying the perks of companionship without the label. Yet, beneath the surface lies unmet expectations and emotional rollercoasters waiting to take off. Not to mention, situationships are notorious for their fast pace nature. Without the solid foundation of commitment, those involved are free to come and go as they please, leading to a constant state of uncertainty and stress. This unpredictability can leave individuals feeling, insecure, and even unsure of where they stand.

In the absence of commitment, there is little incentive to invest time and effort into putting time and effort into a potential relationship, all for it to go to waste the moment someone calls it quits. However, as time goes on, the culture surrounding a relationship has



Although many people believe that they are seeking a connection, they often end up disliking commitment.

changed so much that people would rather choose the damaging alternative than actually putting their all into a possibly good thing. In summation, situationships often serve as a breeding ground for emotional unavailability. With one foot in the door and the other foot out, partners in situationships are susceptible to keeping their emotions at arm’s length. While this may seem like an easy task, it truly only causes emotional detachment. This not only inhibits genuine intimacy but also perpetuates a cycle of detachment and avoidance that many individuals struggle with whilst wanting a partner, and when they actually do have one, there are many traumas to overcome. Without the vulnerability that comes with true emotional connections, situationships are doomed to remain superficial and unfulfilling; explaining why, typically, people go through a lot of them. These patterns just lead to an endless cycle of broken relationships from the start.

It is a given that in contemporary dating, couples often face harsh societal expectations and demands. The influence of social media and popular culture has created a set of unwritten rules that dictate relationship milestones and benchmarks: Making it hard for people to even feel that genuine connection. While situationships may offer temporary conveniences, they ultimately fall short of fulfilling the human need for genuine connection and intimacy. Full of ambiguity, instability, and emotional detachment, situationships are doomed to remain flimsy alternatives: Leaving both partners feeling unfulfilled and ultimately longing for something more meaningful. Rather than settling for the illusion of closeness, individuals would be better served by seeking out relationships built on genuine commitment. Life is much too short to waste one’s efforts on something that will not be remembered in the future.

Studios Profit Despite Lack of Original Films

Lauren Padilla ‘24
Managing Editor

With the relentless release of remakes, reboots, and sequels, many question the direction of Hollywood’s latest movies. The heavy reliance on popular films to create something “new” in the industry has seemed to demonstrate the declining levels of creativity when it comes to world building and plot creation. Whether it be a remake of a classic movie or

the continuation of a well-known franchise, it appears that many studios continue to make this safe choice in order to maximize profits. Many remade movies tend to attempt to create a sense of nostalgia within the film in order to appeal to the audiences of the original. This frequently causes the main plot of the movie to be riddled with references to its predecessor rather than focusing on building a new, engaging plot. Since there is already an established audience built into its release, there is a clear lack of effort by filmmakers

to release something of modern quality. It is assumed that this audience will go view the movie no matter its integrity as they yearn to relive old memories. This phenomenon can also be seen in the rise of television show adaptations of franchise movies, such as *Harry Potter* and *Twilight*. While these shows also attempt to entice new audiences to old stories, a lack of originality persists as they often feature the same exact storyline as the previous film with the only difference being the casting. This almost brings

about a sense of disrespect to the former, beloved actors of the role as many viewers see that their specific portrayal of the character is what made them so special and impactful in the beginning. With this decrease in quality, it can harm the integrity of the original in the eyes of younger audiences. Considering that the remade version is their first exposure to something of the original, it will be heavily judged by them. A lack of satisfaction and entertainment from the new one will discourage newer generations to take the time to view the older version. However, when filmmakers attempt to modernize an original, it often causes it to lose its timeless appeal. This was true of the newly released 2024 *Mean Girls* musical. Many viewers were upset with the attempt to modernize the wardrobe of the latest adaptation, especially when the fashion of the 2004 *Mean Girls* was especially iconic for not only its time but also the modern era. Aside from aesthetics, many remakes overlook the importance of the themes placed into the initial plotlines. This turns a beloved classic into yet another neverending franchise that audiences will grow bored of. While there are certainly successful renditions that feature fresh plots from a new perspective, there is little doubt that most recent releases are nothing more to studios than uninspired cash grabs. Many are content with releasing substandard movies for easy production and financial benefit.



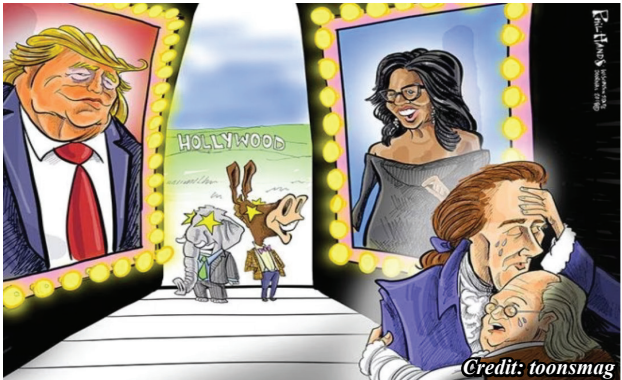
The new Mean Girls movie has recieved a lot of crticism due to the casting choices and changes from the original movie.

Abuse of Power Evident Through Celebrity Media Platforms

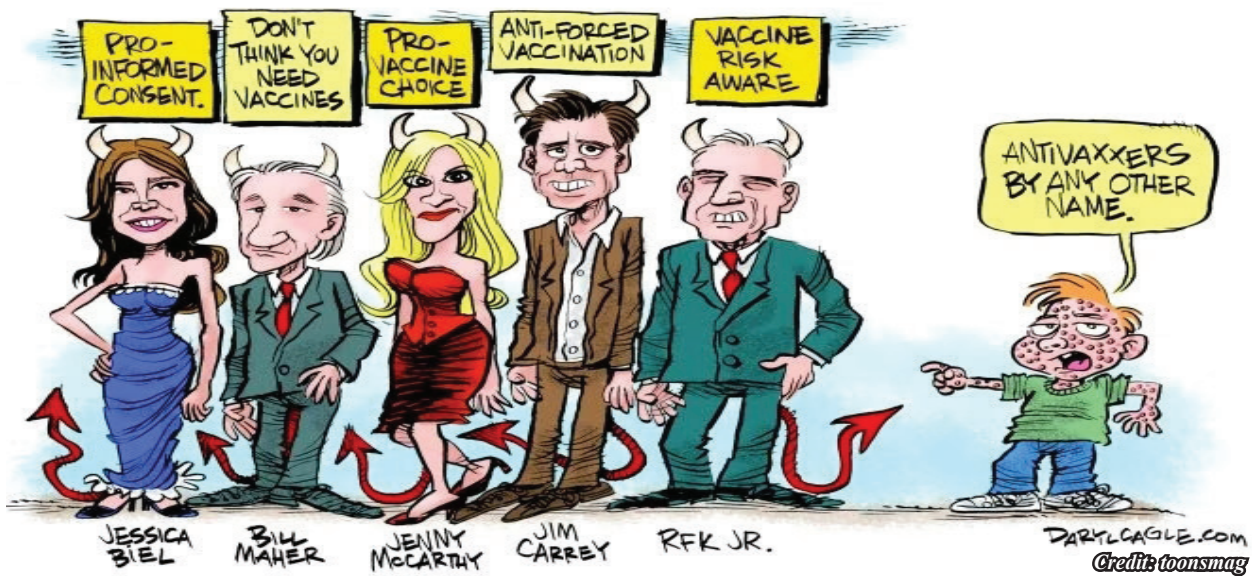
Editorials Staff

Celebrity endorsement of politicians is hardly a new occurrence, but the debate of whether or not it is a celebrity's place to advocate for political leaders surfaces. Celebrities are public figures and one of their main jobs, other than their professional occupations, are to influence their audience. Famous figures hold an important role in society and have the power to change the outcome of major events—including political elections. Oftentimes, celebrities do not have the necessary background knowledge to properly endorse certain campaigns, and because of this, they should not have the ability to sway public opinions that will affect everybody's daily lives.

One prominent example of the dangers of celebrity political influence is Kanye West, a prominent rapper and entrepreneur who announced his candidacy for presidency in 2020. Without a doubt, West has a long history of controversies not only within the music industry, but on every social platform ever known. As a result of this, he commands a massive following and has shown throughout his years how iconic he is said to be. This, paired with his unexpected involvement in politics was met with not only shock, but criticism. Many argued that his lack of political experience and coherent policy proposals undermined the seriousness of his candidacy, turning it into a spectacle rather than a meaningful contribution to political



Members of political parties look to be endorsed by celebrities.



Many celebrities talk about their political stance without background knowledge of the causes they endorse on social media. However, West was not the only celebrity to use their vast fan base to try to run for office. The renowned pop star, Taylor Swift has made comments about the need for society to vote for any change to come from the election. She also further involved herself by recording a song titled "Only the Young" and approved it for use in advertisements and commercials for the Democratic Party that was running for office in 2020. In doing this, she was endorsing the Democratic campaign and using the influence and popularity that she has to promote a certain platform for mass political views. With figures like West and Swift using their extensive fan base to back their political opinions, it displays an abuse of power rather than genuine intent.

Celebrities have the ability to easily sway the public through their popularity and charisma with the help of their large fanbase. Through this, society, following their popular figures, may settle on a candidate without thoroughly evaluating their true intentions. Following the path of public figures shows the major influence that celebrities have and their ability to steer their fanbase in a certain direction, especially

in politics. Celebrities with this power are then able to promote certain matters and address certain issues surrounding politics. Due to celebrity endorsements, political decisions are at risk of being made based on an uneducated influencer rather than dedicated research that will improve the country.

Basing influential impact off of one's celebrity status takes away from the whole point of politics: Alternating viewpoints for the right reasons, not for the most popular. Moreover, the ability of celebrities to persuade people's opinion without necessarily being fully educated on the roles taken within the government ultimately contradicts the integrity of the democratic process as a whole. Although celebrities are people and have the inherent right to express their political viewpoints as any other regular civilian, the lines blur once the power is being abused and used incorrectly. Growing generations have proven themselves to be easily impressionable, and influencers involving themselves in politics creates possibilities of the wrong votes for the wrong reasons.

Love, Not Commerce

Sophie Santana '24
Copy Editor

In a generation often quick to dismiss Valentine's Day as a mere commercialized "Hallmark holiday," its enduring value beyond the trappings of consumerism are easily forgotten. Many are quick to write off Valentine's Day as the epitome of capitalistic idealism, an easy cash grab for companies in the business of manufacturing cliché gifts. But contrary to popular belief, the significance of February 14 goes beyond heart-shaped candies and greeting cards. Valentine's Day holds the potential to serve as an opportunity to revel in love of all types—from romantic and platonic, to familial and self-love. It encourages expressions of affection, provides a welcome occasion for grand, loving gestures, and brings the beauty of human connection in all of its many forms to the forefront of society.

While it is undeniable that commercialization has seeped into the makeup of this beloved holiday, Valentine's Day embodies and encourages far more profound sentiments than the simple purchasing of gifts or the making of dinner reservations. In a fast-paced world where hectic schedules and daily stresses often take control of the lives of many, dedicating a day to the expression of love for partners, friends and family members is incredibly important. Taking the time to strengthen relationships is an opportunity that is not readily available to everyone, nor even on the radar of ideas for many. This means that taking a moment to metaphorically stop and smell the roses of shared adoration is simply not ingrained prominently into society. It is for this reason that the month of February can be viewed as a helpful annual reminder for individuals to deliberately

allocate time to do exactly that.

Beyond just the positivity brought about by the expression of appreciation for interpersonal connections, consciously choosing to have an appreciation for Valentine's Day can have positive impacts on one's emotional well-being. Engaging in acts of kindness, whether through grand romantic gestures or small acts of self-love, is a sure-fire strategy to foster joy and contentment. Even the most jaded cynicism can be softened by the anticipation for the holiday that offers a welcome respite from the rigors of typical daily life. Celebrating it fosters a culture of love and appreciation, enhancing empathy and overall happiness within society. Regardless of one's relationship status or opinions on the respectability of Valentine's Day, it indisputably serves a chance for people to nurture positivity and love, in all of its manifestations.

Innately built into the foundation of the day is the encouragement of strengthening emotional bonds, an act that contributes positively to one's mental health by fostering a sense of belonging and appreciation. Apart from encouraging the appreciation of love and interpersonal relationships, Valentine's Day provides an opportunity to revel in the importance of self-love. People everywhere, regardless of relationship status are capable of enjoying the festivities the day has to offer.

So, whether Valentine's Day has deep, rich historical roots involving Saints and significance, or it was simply marketed into existence by greeting card companies, the profound cultural impact that it continues to hold remains unquestionable. Beyond the exchange of chocolates and flowers often lies an opportunity for heartfelt gestures and meaningful expressions of love toward friends, family, and significant others that simply would not likely have been prompted without the existence of this beautiful holiday.

Unnecessary Hate Against Swift

Sky Roman '24
Editor-in-Chief

Ever since the new and publicized relationship between Kansas City Chiefs tight end Travis Kelce and singer-songwriter Taylor Swift has emerged, avid fans of both have become extremely divided. Many claim that Swift has ruined football and condemn the instances in which she attends the sporting events to support her boyfriend. However, the reactions of these football fans have been completely unnecessary and are an overreaction. Regardless of how one might feel about her music or her past actions, the hate she has received is rooted in baseless internet discourse rather than actual facts about the situation.

It is evident that the National Football League (NFL) viewership has significantly increased since Swift has made appearances at Kelce's games. Due to this, many believe that Swift has been given too much screen time during NFL broadcasts. Yet, when calculated, she has actually received an average of less than a minute of screen time during many of the

games. However, she is still not to be blamed for the small amount of screen time she receives, as she does not choose when they decide to show her or what they decide to air. The coordinating producer of the games prepares for how they will cover her, yet they have stated they ensure not to focus on her during the game, instead balancing it to enhance reactions from what is happening within the entirety of the game. Despite this, people still believe that Swift is to blame, not taking into account the fact that her celebrity status would of course get her some screen time, just like any famous individual would.

Even further, the type of hatred from fans has become extreme. In the most recent case, angry football fans have started to create Artificial Intelligence generated photos of the songwriter, most of them being inappropriate and even depict her being objectified and harassed within the football stands. All of these images are faked in order to ruin her reputation and get "revenge" on her for subjectively ruining the games. Creating such graphic images of a person in retaliation for her simply supporting Kelce on the field is distasteful and only

showcases immaturity on their end.

Of course, there are some valid criticisms of Swift and her fans. Her fanbase has been known to be extreme regarding their support of her, despite some of her controversial actions. Disliking her music or her as an individual should not be frowned upon, but individuals need to know to what extent their hatred is justified, and when it is completely baseless. Hating a person because of exaggerated rumors and going as far as to harass them is not needed, when instead one could provide valid and constructive criticism about a person's character.

While the media attention on the public has begun to fade, there still seems to be quite a bit of hostility from both parties' fans, most of these insults being thrown around on different social media platforms. This sort of discourse about celebrities is not a new phenomenon, yet many individuals are treating it as if it is. That is why it is important to realize that relationships between two famous individuals are almost always going to gain that type of attention and having extreme reactions about it in any capacity will not change that fact.



Taylor Swift often supports her boyfriend at the games, leading many football fans to express unnecessary hate against her.

Faculty Follies’ Awaited Return

Athletes Hit the Big Stage

Ava Torner ‘26
A/E Editor

There are many students on campus who cannot afford the commodities that other students can with ease. That is why Faculty Follies is being held. All of the money raised from ticket sales will go toward buying students who are less fortunate tickets for Prom, a yearbook, spirit wear, and more. Faculty Follies will be held on March 21 as an after-school event starting at 7PM. Faculty Follies is where staff members put on their best performance for students to enjoy. Faculty Follies was held before, back in 2017, however it sadly stopped running until now. This school year has been a year of change in student culture with the Puma Pit and more. That is why Faculty Follies are being held once again, because now, more than ever, the school needs more culture harnessed on campus. While tickets are not yet for sale, students should be on the lookout on Chaparral High School’s Instagram, [@chaparralpumas](#), for more information. Some staff members are deciding to perform in a group rather than by themselves. Mrs. Martha Guy is one teacher who has put a step forward and has decided to put on a faculty-student string quartet at the event. She stated, “I played the violin for ten years as a

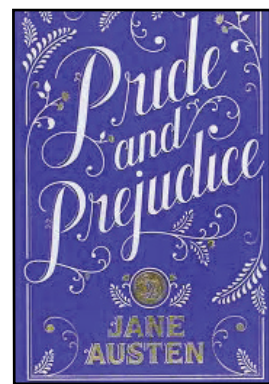


Robert Clause and Jeff Kingsberg battle it out with inflatable bumpers. kid. I have not played the violin in twenty-five years, so I am going to have to practice regularly to get up to speed. The students in our quartet are definitely much more skilled.” Guy is one of many staff members excited for Faculty Follies to be back, and she thinks helping raise money for students and families who are in need is a wonderful thing to do. The last time Faculty Follies was held, there was a significant turnout, with over twenty staff acts for students to enjoy. There were many different kinds of performances throughout all of the last Faculty Follies. This includes when Mr. Tony Rossi sang his own version of “Creep” by Radiohead while wearing Temecula Valley High School merchandise. Another well-remembered performance was by Mrs. Teresa Childs when she performed as Lady Gaga with student backup dancers. Faculty Follies is going to be a great production full of various talents, and it is a way for students to come together as one and celebrate the amazing staff at Chaparral. Faculty Follies is also a way for staff members to show a different side of themselves to students outside the classroom. This production is going to be a great way to grow culture on campus while also allowing many students to make unforgettable memories alongside their staff members. If students would like to see some of their favorite staff members put on a fun show, then Faculty Follies is the perfect event to attend.

Miriya Platero ‘24
Staff Writer

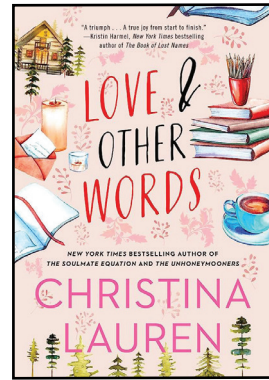
The Varsity Dance team on campus is well-known in the community for their breathtaking talents and skills, but students in other sports can also put on an enjoyable show. Dancing with the Pumas is an annual event hosted by the Varsity Dance team in collaboration with the Associated Student Body (ASB). This year, the performance will occur on February 23. The event embodies community, as it allows for different sports teams on campus to collaborate through original choreographies and engage in friendly competition. Each of the fourteen participating Varsity Dance members is teamed up with a member of a different Varsity sport. The pairs then perform face-to-face for the title of winner. Dancing with the Pumas allows members from different sports and their social circles to go out and support each other. The idea behind Dancing with the Pumas was pitched by Synergy Captain Senior Natalya Delgado after seeing similar events hosted by neighboring schools. Though the event is still quite new, it has been a hit within the Puma community. With the event being recently developed, the organizers are still trying to find ways to improve the performance. Director of Dancing with the Pumas, Mrs. Alyssa Salas, explained, “Last year, we allowed [members of other performing arts sectors] to participate with the Varsity members, but to keep the competition fair, we are focusing on athletes with no experience in dance so everyone has a [equal advantage].”

Since last year, one change made has been allocating the attention from other dance sectors such as Junior Varsity Dance to purely other sports by only allowing non-dancers to participate. While learning the dances comes quicker to those on the Varsity team, keeping on time and maintaining consistency can be proven more difficult for their partners, who are not accustomed to dancing. Delgado described, “While it is a different experience [seeing] dance from someone else’s point of view who isn’t able to depict [dance] as well as a dancer, the experience of challenging someone to try something new is [exciting].” Delgado claims that the change of scenery from working with other dancers is eye-opening. Despite the idea that only the dancers’ partners would be trying to get over the learning curve, having to learn intricate choreographies and keep up with their experienced counterparts, the participating dancers have also grown. Developing the patience to teach someone with no prior experience and help build their skills to win is no easy feat. Copious amounts of discipline are needed to perform. Contestants are required to attend practices for the event every Friday for forty-five minutes over a five-week period. Even outside of practice, contestants practice their choreography to ensure they impress the judges. Salas explained that the main focus of the event is to, “introduce people to the art [and have them] take something away from the world of dance.” Dancing with the Pumas allows other students in extracurriculars who are not deemed to reside in the artistic world to get a taste of performance arts.



Alana Adams ‘25
Staff Writer

Originally written in 1813 by Jane Austen, “Pride and Prejudice” is an elegant, historical romance novel following Elizabeth Bennet and Fitzwilliam Darcy, otherwise known as Mr. Darcy. The two meet when Mr. Darcy and his friend Charles Bingley take a journey to a settlement named Merytown. The two begin their stay in a manor called Netherfield Park. As rumors begin to spread of their fortune, the two men are invited to a town ball where all of the main characters meet for the first time. Mr. Bingley quickly falls in love with Elizabeth’s sister, Jane. Unlike Mr. Bingley, Mr. Darcy creates an uproar with the town, as he instantly butting heads with Elizabeth Bennet. The two frustrate one another and are established as enemies. Although Mr. Darcy begins his stay unfriendly and aloof, his heart of ice begins to melt with time. As love begins to bloom, Mr. Darcy becomes captivated by Elizabeth. This novel is filled with extravagant scenes, beautiful descriptions, and fulfilling romances. Its slower nature makes the results all the more worth it. Austen’s descriptions of scenes create a perfect display for the reader. In expansion to its graceful way of molding the plot, it also provides a great deal of blossoming romances for the audience to relish. This novel is a fantastical read for Valentine’s Day as it immerses the reader and evokes an adorning passion within both the characters and the audience.

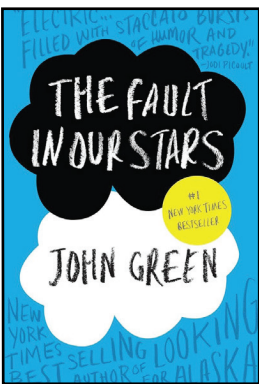


Hailey Mera ‘25
Editorials Editor

“Love and Other Words” by Christina Lauren is a captivating contemporary romance that explores the complexities of love, the importance of friendship, and the impact of past decisions on the present. The story follows Macy Sorensen and Elliot Petropoulos, childhood friends who reconnect after a decade of separation. Alternating between Macy and Elliot’s teenage years and their adult lives, their deep rooted history is revealed. Growing up, the two form a deep connection through their shared love of words and literature, which ultimately causes their friendship to evolve into a profound bond. However, circumstances force them apart, leaving questions and unresolved emotions. As adults, Macy is a successful doctor engaged to be married, while Elliot has become a novelist. This sudden, yet intended, reunion sparks a flood of buried feelings and the novel explores whether they can confront their past and redefine their relationship. The emotional intensity is heightened as secrets and misunderstandings from their childhood resurface, causing both characters to experience waves of emotions they both spent so long repressing. The central theme revolves around the transformative power of words and the healing potential of love. The narrative weaves together the joy of language, the pain of loss, and the hope for a second chance. Lauren skillfully develops the characters, allowing readers to empathize with Macy and Elliot as they navigate their emotions towards one another. The chemistry between Macy and Elliot is undeniable, and readers are taken on a rollercoaster of emotions as they read.

Alexia DeLeon ‘24
Video Manager

Written by John Green, “The Fault in Our Stars” tells a heartwarming, yet emotional story that unravels the delicate intricacies of life, love, and loss. The novel follows the journey of sixteen-year-old cancer survivor, Hazel Grace Lancaster, whose world is forever changed when she meets a charismatic amputee, Augustus Waters at a cancer support group. Hazel, is quickly drawn to Augustus’ shared sense of humor and deep appreciation for literature. After Augustus introduces Hazel to his favorite book, the two embark on a journey to meet its reclusive author and their friendship blossoms into a deep connection that transcends the confines of their cancer. Despite the harsh realities of their illnesses, Hazel and Augustus find solace and meaning in their connection. The love story of Hazel and Augustus is one that defies the conventional expectations of a teenage romance. Green’s exploration of grief and loss imposes emotional twists and turns that navigate the questions of purpose, legacy, and the impact one can have on others. This novel encapsulates the importance of human connection and the beauty that can be found even in the darkest moments. With Green’s authentic, emotional impact, “The Fault in Our Stars” will surely pull at the reader’s heartstrings and uplift them with a profound sense of the fragility of life.



Sophie Santana ‘24
Copy Editor

Published in 2022, Lynn Painter’s novel entitled “The Do-Over” is the perfect paradigm of the beloved young-adult (YA) romance genre. Featuring classic tropes, relatable and lovable characters, and references that are sure to bring smiles to readers, Painter’s novel is the epitome of YA romance, mixed with a touch of fantasy. The novel follows the main character and romance fanatic, Emilie Hornby, as she strives to have the perfect Valentine’s Day with her boyfriend, Josh. However, after catching Josh in the middle of a kiss with another girl, sending her plans for the perfect holiday crashing down, Emilie finds herself stuck in a time loop, forced to relive the same Valentine’s Day over and over. Alas, Josh’s infidelity is not the only unfortunate part of Emilie’s continuously repeating day, as she finds herself continuously thrown in the path of the standoffish and enigmatic Nick Stark. Forced together by a fantastical twist of fate and unencumbered by the fear of what tomorrow will bring, the pair find themselves embarking on a carefree adventure whilst love is in the air. Accentuated by laugh-out-loud dialogue and a healthy dose of Taylor Swift references, “The Do-Over” is an all around wonderful read. Painter’s novel encapsulates a mixture of classic YA romance and a whimsical bit of fantasy that is uniquely complemented by her witty style of writing. For anyone in search of a lighthearted romance to indulge in this Valentine’s Day, look no further than Lynn Painter’s latest.



Cleveland's
Loving Message



Live, Laugh, Love...Locked Room

“To realize that all your life — you know, all your love, all your hate, all your memories, all your pain — it was all the same thing. It was all the same dream, a dream that you had inside a locked room, a dream about being a person. And like a lot of dreams, there’s a monster at the end of it.”
-Rust Cohle (True Detective Season 1, Episode 3)

As Valentine’s Day approaches the need to express your love becomes commercialized to the extent of hilarity. Some will go the traditional route — flowers, love letters filled with undying love, specialized candy, or three word motivational phrases. Some of you will go a different route because last year you were with the same person and you want to change things up. Others might question their choice in love and realize that person is not the one for them on the timeline of life. However for most, past Valentines (former love) will eventually become fading memories stored inside your own locked room. Whatever the outcome may be, why not simply have an honest conversation with someone on Valentine’s Day. Maybe your own locked room might be only one light year away from that special someone. But then again, Elon Musk’s Neuralink just successfully placed an implant in a human brain.

Diversity Dominates Award Season

Alyza Reclusado ‘24
Staff Writer

Every year brings new television series and films with a variety of actors and actresses. Ceremonies like the Emmy Awards and the Golden Globes are held annually to highlight the talents of these individuals as well as captivating media made in the previous year. So far, the 2024 awards season has been one for the books, with many actresses of color taking home awards for the first time. In an increasingly diverse world,

a woman of color win something as huge as a Golden Globe ... Hopefully, this trend [continues] in the future.” Gladstone’s feat serves as a stepping stone for future Indigenous actors aspiring to follow in her footsteps.

The 73rd Emmy Awards made history for its recognition of actresses of color in various categories. Ali Wong from Netflix’s *BEEF* became the first Asian woman to win an Emmy for Outstanding Lead Actress in a Limited Series. In the comedy category, Quinta Brunson won Outstanding Lead Actress for playing Janine Teagues in *Abbott Elementary*,

character Maya Lopez from *Hawkeye*, portrayed by actress Alaqua Cox. Cox is a deaf, Indigenous woman with a prosthetic leg, who, despite her seeming “setbacks,” performs her own stunts in the show. As Maya Lopez is Marvel’s first deaf and Indigenous superhero, Cox noted the importance of having authentic representation of Indigenous folk and disabled characters portrayed in a positive light. Fans of the series, like Freshman Jayce Contreras, admired Cox’s talents. “I think it is important to have people like [Cox] portray characters like [Lopez],” he



Quinta Brunson takes home Emmy for Best Lead Actress in comedy for her performance in the T.V. series Abbott Elementary.

the recognition of these individuals highlights the importance of representation in the media industry.

Though many great wins came out of the 81st Golden Globe Awards, Lily Gladstone’s was monumental, making her the first Indigenous person to receive a Golden Globe. Gladstone, who is of Piegan Blackfeet and Nez Perce descent, won Best Performance by a Female Actor in a Motion Picture for Drama for starring in *Killers of the Flower Moon*. Senior Charlize Lopez commented on the win, saying, “It was great [seeing]

becoming the second Black actress to win the title. Following Brunson, Ayo Edebiri was awarded the Outstanding Supporting Actress Award for playing Sydney Adamu in *The Bear*. Edebiri and Brunson’s win marked the first time two Black women have won Emmy awards in the comedy category in the same year, setting a major milestone in the history of the industry.

While 2023 was a great year for media, 2024 continues the trend of representation with Marvel Studios *Echo*, a Disney+ series released on January 9. The series follows fictional

said. “When it comes to characters like this ... you need accuracy.”

In an industry broadcasted to millions worldwide, representation matters. Award winners like Brunson and Gladstone remind us that anyone, regardless of race or identity, can be a star. Expanding the diversity to deaf and amputee actors like Cox proves that no matter the hurdles, there is no limit to what one can achieve. As the media awards season continues with the Academy Awards in March, many eagerly wait to see who is next to take home an award.

Percy Jackson TV Series Ushers in a New Wave of Fans

Kayla Wiley ‘24
Copy Editor

In 2005, Rick Riordan released “The Lightning Thief,” the first book in the Percy Jackson franchise. Nineteen years later, there are now seventeen published books all set within this fictional universe. Over the years, millions of copies have been sold, captivating fans of all ages around the world. In a shocking, yet delightful surprise to fans, it was announced in May of 2020 that the series would be adapted into a television show on Disney+. After three years of dedicated work from numerous actors,



Walker Scobell plays Percy Jackson in new series.

screenwriters, producers, and more, the first two episodes were released on December 19, 2023, running until the finale on January 31, 2024. The initial season covered the events of “The Lightning Thief,” and it quickly gained traction with over 13.3 million viewers tuned in to the premiere episodes within the first week.

For many, the book series has become a source of hope and inspiration, offering an adventure of a lifetime. Within the pages lies a timeless story that anyone can pick up and enjoy for themselves. Senior Camden Ackerman, a longtime fan of the series, stated, “The books changed my life and gave me a love for Greek mythology.” Mirroring the original novel, the show follows a twelve-year-old boy named Percy Jackson. Labeled as a troubled child, Percy has been expelled from numerous schools and struggles with navigating the challenges of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and dyslexia. However, Percy discovers himself to be a demigod, a half-god and half-human, and realizes that his learning difficulties are unique strengths. As the series is built upon Greek mythology, Percy navigates being the son of Poseidon while traveling on a quest with Annabeth Chase, another demigod, and Grover Underwood, a satyr. The three embark on a journey to find Zeus’ missing lightning bolt, encountering setbacks in the form of monster attacks, a prolonged stay at a mystical hotel, and a confrontational encounter with a Greek god.

While the series was originally brought to the big screen in 2010 and 2013 with movie adaptations, some fans felt that they lacked the charm found within the books. “The story and portrayal of the books could have been done better,” explained Ackerman. In response to this feedback, changes were made in the production of the television series, and Riordan played an integral role in the creative process. “The producers and directors took in so much time to add every detail from the book,” stated



Percy Jackson and the Olympians recieved a high audience score of ninety percent on Rotten Tomatoes.

Leah Jeffries, who plays Annabeth Chase, in an interview with Complex. In the end, three young actors were chosen to portray the main characters: Walker Scobell as Percy Jackson, Jeffries as Annabeth Chase, and Aryan Simhardi as Grover Underwood. The actors closely match the ages of their characters in the books, each offering their unique spins to bringing these cherished characters to life. The television series connects different

generations with the same magic of the books. Many fans watch with a sense of nostalgia, witnessing a piece of their childhood being brought to the screen. At the same time, a new audience is being introduced to the story for the first time through the Disney+ platform. With a TV-PG rating, the show is able to reach an audience of all ages, allowing a new wave of fans to grow up with the same beloved story that has captivated many before them.

Affordable Planning to Show Love

Alice Signorello '25
Staff Writer

There are several affordable ways for students to show love or affection for those that they care about. For some people, to show affection may come from the thoughtful act of giving gifts, while for others, spending quality time with a loved one is most appreciated. On campus, there are several students with different views on how to express love to those around them.

Senior Layla Garcia prefers to show her love by organizing special dates or occasions where she can spend time with the person she loves. However, what really matters to her during a date are the genuine discussions that leave a lasting impact. "I think communication is a good gift," Garcia explained. "If you have good, deep conversations, then you're just open with each other about a lot of things, and I think it becomes really fun." Many people do not have the opportunity to spend a lot of money, so it is also important to know how to organize dates saving money. Garcia organizes dates on a budget while still creating memorable experiences. She particularly loves spending time with her boyfriend walking around the neighborhood and organizing cooking dates. "I would say something as small as that could really show a lot of love," said Garcia.

Another alternative way to show love to someone is to make gifts. For instance, Senior Samuel Perales prefers to make homemade gifts instead of buying them. "I would write letters or I would do origami," he said. After the unfortunate passing of his friend's dog, Perales decided to create origami roses to give him and his family to show support



"Love note" jars have become a popular gift idea that are inexpensive to make. during a difficult time. Perales is also in the pottery class, and he uses his creations as gifts for his family, friends, and girlfriend. "If you make something, it shows that you took the time and the effort ... you put in your love to put in and make something for someone," Perales expressed. He thinks that making a homemade gift has more of an impact as a gift compared to just spending money on something that is in the store.

In his opinion, the perfect idea for a gift to a loved one is a handwritten letter. "A good handwritten letter is always ... one of the best things [to receive]," Perales added. This gift is a great idea because it is one of the most sincere and true ways to express love for someone, by putting feelings on a paper. Handwritten letters are an affordable, but meaningful way to show one's

love. "It's more a way to connect emotionally and explain your emotions better than anything," he said. Perales also recommends looking up YouTube tutorials for origami as another means of expressing love. "Origami, like flowers or like little animals or something like that. It's always like a nice little gift ... It shows love and it takes time," he commented.

Many people, especially students on campus, are not financially independent. For this reason, it is good to know how to create gifts in an efficient and inexpensive manner to express affection for loved ones. There are several alternatives to make inexpensive gifts, which most people will hold more appreciation for. Perales concluded, "A gift should be something that comes from the heart ... it's something that you should put time, emotion, care, and love into."

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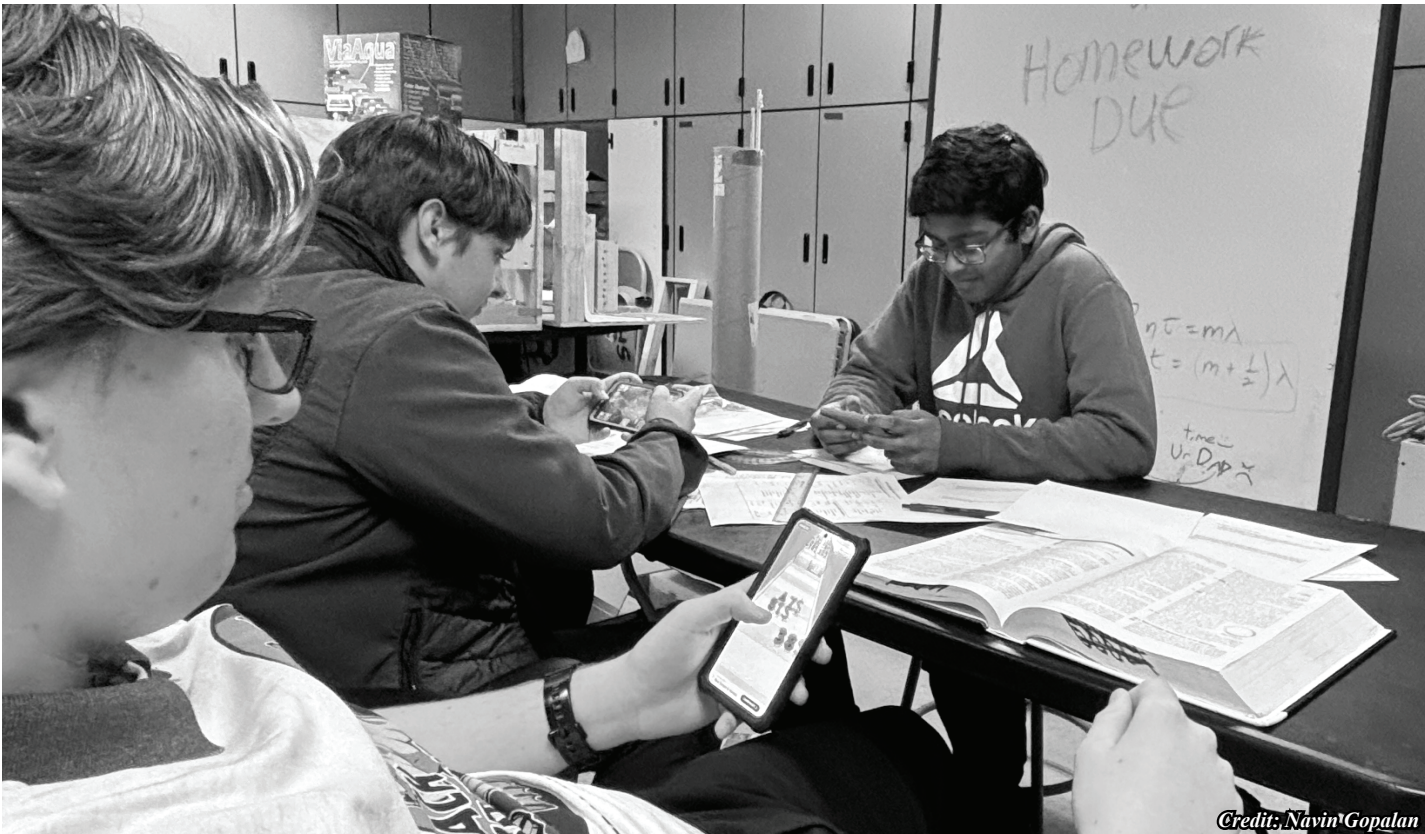
Stopping the Seemingly Never-Ending Cycle of Bad Habits

Ava Torner '26
Staff Writer

Bad habits are patterns that people consistently do that can harm them or be a nuisance in their lives. Oftentimes, bad habits can creep in and develop over some time due to stress, past trauma, people's environment, or sometimes just without a cause. Bad habits can consist of someone biting their nails, pulling their hair, procrastinating, and more. However, something every bad habit has in common is that once they become routine, it is hard to shake off and put an end to the cycle. At times, it may seem that the habits are fermented in people's lives and may seem like a burden. However, that is not necessarily the case. Many solutions to bad habits are available to anyone to help stop the cycle that may seem to go on forever.

Many students have bad habits that have ben solved with simple changes in their life that they implemented. Sophomore Aliyah Aguayo struggled with procrastination in schoolwork, which caused her grades to slip. However, she was able to turn it around by getting rid of the factors that led to procrastination "I put my phone in a drawer and put my AirPods in," Aguayo explained. "[I] played white noise and not music ... now, my grades are up." Procrastination is a major bad habit that many people struggle with on different levels. Yet, turning off the screens and shutting out social media could be the trick to counter-attack procrastination.

While some bad habits may just be an annoyance to have, some can be physically destructive to oneself. A common example is biting nails and the skin around the nails. This habit can be especially hard to shake off as it is most often caused by stress or anxiety



Seniors Johnathan Persechini and Aditya Sivanandan, and Sophomore Chris Persechini play video games while their pressing homework looms. which people have to deal with all their life. Sophomore Holly Tweedle is a student on campus who has this issue, and was able to temporarily stop the bad habit when she was having a very hectic period going on in her life where a stressor kept coming along. This stressor caused her to be temporarily distracted, which then led to her forgetting to bite her nails. Tweedle stated, "What helped me stop as well is putting tips [a type of fake nail] on my nails which made them all cutesy but then my dad got into a bike crash that hurt him severely, which caused me to relapse and start biting my nails again." Sometimes bad habits can be temporarily shoved down and for a short-time be gone, however, this method can be unhealthy because once that inconvenience or a major stressor that kept the bad habits shoved down goes away, that allows a previous bad habit to creep in once again. Trying to solve a bad habit and rid it from one's daily routine can prove to be difficult. People can try over and over again and still go back to their old ways. However, the solution to improve one's habit is not a one-way street. The resolution can be different for everyone and no matter how far gone an individual may think they are. There will always be a way to find peace and get out of their bad habit. This is why people should keep doing whatever they can to help calm their habit because people never know, maybe altering one simple thing can be life-changing.

Girls Water Polo Makes a Splash

Sophia Preciado ‘27
Staff Writer

The Varsity Girls Water Polo team makes a splash into the new season, as Head Coach Mr. Joshua Stone leads the team into a successful year. “This year, we are returning the majority of our major contributors from last year, and we are now an experienced team,” Coach Stone explained. As the girls return, with more experience and based off the bonds built from

stamina in swimming, and multiple scrimmages against JV [Junior Varsity] to help with live game scenarios,” Senior Aidan Mante expressed. As a captain, Mante sees how the team has grown not only in the water, but also outside through friendships and unbreakable bonds. With the girls becoming so strong, it is easy to say that they were in a great spot to have a very successful season. Throughout the season, the girls worked hard and practiced, making sure that the team

only get stronger, so does their gameplay. It is not hard to see how far the girls will go, and they only improve with every dive they take. The girls have done an outstanding job at pushing through their struggles. While successful last year, the team had a few setbacks. However, with senior members graduating, the team was able to accept many new girls onto the Varsity team. Now that there are so many experienced players, the girls have really stepped up their game,



Credit: Natália Ferrette

Senior Natália Ferrette winds up for a shot on goal. The team’s impressive ability to score earned them second place in the league.

last season, the team has hopes in ranking high in the California Interscholastic Federation (CIF) playoffs. Sure enough, the hard work put in by the girls led to them landing a spot in the second-seed pool, where they will fight for first place in Division 2, with hopes of bringing home the gold. The success of the team did not just happen overnight. Players have dedicated many days to reach the full potential of the team—practices from Monday through Friday after school, along with many morning practices. “We did a lot of rigorous conditioning like swim sets, training legs with weight belts to help with

was truly ready to play amongst the best for a championship spot. The family that the team has formed is exceptional. The support shown for one another only strengthens the way the girls play the game and interact on and off the deck. “The bond we have as a team is rare, one I am most fortunate to be a part of,” Senior Julia Neal explained. “As a team captain, I love the ability to push my teammates while still motivating them as a living reminder of our future outcome. With that, I love the connections that I have made with every single player. I would trust these girls with anything.” As the team’s bonds

as “our strength and experience outweighs the majority of other teams, leading to the prediction of heading into CIF,” Neal stated. “We are not taking anything for granted, but as we move forward, each game contributes to our end goal.” Sure enough, the girls pulled through in recent tournaments, placing second in two and landing first in another. As of Monday, the girls were second in their league and CIF division. The team will not stop until they get what they want, which is to bring home the championship title. The girls will continue to battle it out and work hard to finish the season as one of the best.

49er’s Take On Chiefs

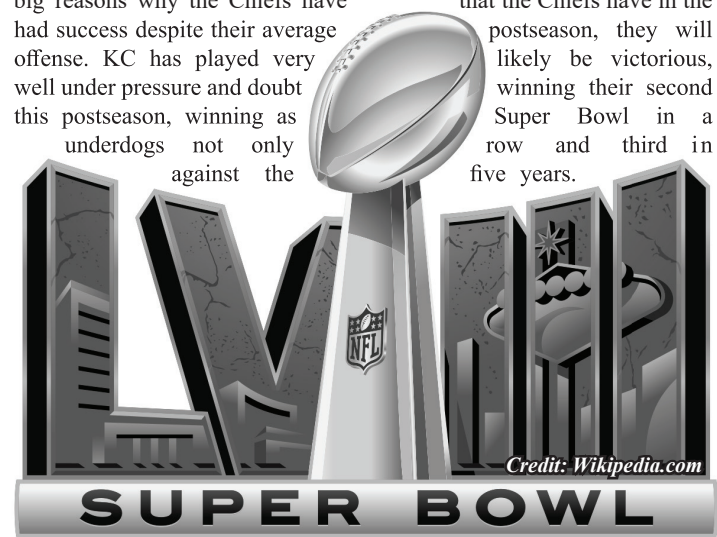
Jackson Gamero ‘24
Staff Writer

In a Super Bowl LIV rematch, the Kansas City (KC) Chiefs and San Francisco (SF) 49er’s are set to face off in Super Bowl LVIII once again. The game will be played at Allegiant Stadium in Las Vegas, Nevada on Sunday, February 11 at 3:30pm.

The Chiefs, who will represent the American Football Conference (AFC), are led by superstar quarterback Patrick Mahomes III, who has won two Super Bowls, one of which was against the 49er’s in 2020. Although this season was not Mahomes’ best, he found a way to excel in the postseason this year, taking down good teams with seemingly no problem. Despite KC having their worst overall record since 2017, they have shown constant grit throughout the postseason, while simultaneously displaying their ability to fight through hardship. The team’s offense has lacked productivity this season and has leaned on their defense to keep them in games. This has been evident in the playoffs, specifically in the AFC Championship game against the Baltimore Ravens. While they only scored seventeen points total, their defense really showed up, being sure to tightly cover the Ravens’ top receiving threats. This does not mean that viewers are to discount the offensive weapons that the Chiefs have. Tight end Travis Kelce and running back Isiah Pacheco have heavily impacted games, and are big reasons why the Chiefs have had success despite their average offense. KC has played very well under pressure and doubt this postseason, winning as underdogs not only against the

Ravens, but also when they were on the road against the Buffalo Bills in frigid temperatures. The Chiefs are currently 1.5 point underdogs in the showdown against SF. The National Football Conference (NFC) representatives, the SF 49er’s, have dominated the league almost all season. Boasting the top seed in the NFC and a 12-5 regular season record, SF has shown that they have all the tools to win a Super Bowl on a weekly basis. Without any apparent flaw, SF is built to win it all. Carried by running back Christian McCaffery, the 49er’s have been able to run through opposing defenses all season. Their pass attack has been strong as well, with second-year quarterback Brock Purdy throwing 4,280 passing yards and thirty-one touchdowns. With the third-most points per game in the league, the offense ran like a well-oiled machine. Additionally, SF’s strong defense has been a formidable force to be dealt with by offenses across the league, giving up the third-least amount of points on the season. However, SF has played rather lacklusterly in the postseason, barely escaping upsets by the Green Bay Packers in the NFC Divisional Round and the Detroit Lions in the NFC Championship Game. However, this has allowed the grit and fight of the team, led by Head Coach Mr. Kyle Shanahan, to have not only been tested, but proven.

This edition of the Super Bowl is set to be a close game, which should come down to the wire. However, due to the experience that the Chiefs have in the postseason, they will likely be victorious, winning their second Super Bowl in a row and third in five years.



Super Bowl LVIII is set to be a nail-biting game with two high-caliber teams.

Athlete Spotlights

Photos and Spotlights by
Julian Stanfield ‘24
Sports Editor

Travion Jones ‘25

Boys Wrestling

this season. He specializes in the single-leg takedown and stands out with a style of wrestling that is akin to a “slick, fast wrestler,” as described by him. Previously, Jones was a running back for the Junior Varsity Football team which helped him with conditioning and taught him to be more disciplined. This year, Jones aimed to become a state champion as well as help his teammates achieve their own goals in wrestling. He intends to go to college after high school and become an anesthesiologist.

Bella Baldocchi ‘26

Girls Soccer

Wrapping up her second year of being on the Varsity team, Sophomore Bella Baldocchi began playing soccer at the age of two. Baldocchi defends

Jonah Santa Maria ‘26

Boys Basketball

in the back line as either a center-back or left wing-back and uses her speed to chase down opponents. “People don’t really think about it, but if strikers are fast [and] the defense is the people catching up to them, [they] have to be ... faster than them,” she explained. Despite having a serious injury last year, Baldocchi’s passion for the sport and supportive teammates enabled her to make a full recovery. She desires to keep playing soccer in college and wants to become a sports doctor in the future.

forward positions. He does well at shooting, which he refined through travel basketball, but is working to improve his defending. Santa Maria hoped to assist the team with achieving at least one win and increase the average points he scores per game. His dad is a major influence for him as he stated, “Just seeing how hard he works, is the biggest [inspiration and he is] who I look up to the most.” After graduating, Santa Maria plans to play basketball in college if he receives an offer or attend community college.

Unified: Maze and Masters

Dallin Grey ‘24
Editor-in-Chief

Unified Sports is a program that gives students with intellectual disabilities the opportunity to compete in sports alongside their peer helpers who do not have intellectual disabilities. Athlete Senior Isaiah Maze and helper Junior Marcus Masters have participated in each of the Unified Sports events this year and have become important members of the team.

Maze first joined Unified Sports when he heard about a basketball tournament they were participating in. He signed up and had a very enjoyable time, making him want to compete more. For Maze, one of the most important aspects of the team is competing with other students with special needs. “The kids are amazing, I love helping [the kids with] special [needs],” he said. In the last track and field competition for Unified Sports, Maze was able to

make it to the California Interscholastic Federation (CIF) tournament where he was able to place second in the shot put. As for his post-high school plans, Maze hopes to study sports medicine at Orange Coast College and have a career as a football scout.

Masters took a teacher’s suggestion to join the Unified Sports program as a helper last school year and has found it to be extremely rewarding. “I thought I’d give it a shot,” he said, “but as, like, I went through the class more, I noticed that, like, I really started enjoying helping people out.” Even though Masters has only been a part of the past three competitions, the effect on him has been profound. “I can never have a bad time with [the kids with special needs], and ... even if I come in on, like, a bad day, they cheer me up so fast.” Those looking to join the program can be certain that doing so is beyond worthwhile, giving them valuable insight into the lives of those with disabilities.



Maze and Masters often compete together as part of the Unified Sports program.

“Jojo” Bartlett Shines on the Court

Jackson Gamero ‘24
Staff Writer

Standing in at 5’11” and constantly shining on the court, Sophomore Jocori “Jojo” Bartlett has taken over games and played an important role on the Varsity Boys Basketball team this year. Displaying the adept ability to shoot, pass, and handle the ball, Bartlett has shown time and time again that he is a playmaker and a star that cannot be left open by other teams.

Bartlett began playing basketball when he was six years old when his dad inspired him to join a team. Since he started playing, Bartlett has looked up to Nazreon “Naz” Reid, a player for the Minnesota Timberwolves of the National Basketball Association. Reid’s ability to shoot stuck with Bartlett and has served as his top inspiration to this point. Bartlett’s ability to dominate the stat sheet in the points category has proven to be his best trait, displayed all throughout the season. His top games have come against Canyon Springs High School and Adelanto High School, where he scored twenty-five points, and against Murrieta Valley High School, when he scored twenty-six points, respectively. Averaging a total of 15.3 points per game, with other exceptional stats such as the average of 1.9 steals per game that Bartlett attains, he has continued to make a difference on the court. However, there are things that Bartlett would like to continue working on. “I would improve on my shot selection,” Bartlett specified. By taking better shots, Bartlett could potentially score more points, thus helping the team even more.

Bartlett first joined the Varsity Boys Basketball team as a



Bartlett dribbles the ball down the court, looking to capitalize on a fastbreak.

freshman, and has made a strong impression since. However, just as he has helped the team, the school’s program has also helped him become the player that he is today. “[The basketball program] made me a more comfortable scorer,” Bartlett explained. Bartlett’s ability on the court has not gone unnoticed by coaches. Head Coach Mr. Jordan Searby stated, “[Bartlett’s] game is a really skilled game and he can get to the bucket, he can score from the outside, and so his ability to score is something that we [have] needed.”

As the team finishes its season, Bartlett hopes to continue improving. Specifically, he plans on continuing to get better at shooting and working on his ability to dunk the ball. He has also set important goals for himself, as he hopes to add height and win a Most Valuable Player award. In order to achieve these goals, Bartlett will continue to work hard and do his best to stand out from the competition. In the future, he hopes to play for a university program that is willing to give him the chance to do so.

Girls Soccer Builds Connections On and Off of the Field

Sophia Preciado ‘27
Staff Writer

Confidence and a positive attitude have been the main drives for the Varsity Girls Soccer team, as well as creating a close bond with one another to make it through the season. Although the team has faced many hurdles throughout the season, the girls always find a way to bounce back from their challenges even stronger than before, leading to strong victories, like their recent win against Hesperia High School. As the bonds the girls have grown together get stronger, the team’s outcomes have only gotten better.

Only her second year coaching, Head Coach Ms. Brooklin Brumund has elevated the standard and what it means to be on the team by establishing a steady approach that is new to the players. “Last year, we were very defense dependent, focusing on preventing the other team from scoring and playing more of a cautious game. This year, we are setting the goal to become a much more offensive team, having the mindset of attacking for points and becoming a more aggressive team,” Coach Brumund expressed. “This year, we have a lot more depth in each position, allowing us to be able to have the successes we have had this season.” That being said, the team has been able to compete better than they have in the past, especially against neighboring school Temecula Valley High School. What once was a feared team to play against has now become just another opponent as the team finds new confidence with the new approach Coach Brumund is setting for the team. As it takes time for a new culture to establish itself, the team has embraced the new changes well.

The team wanted to start the season strong and started workouts as early as early

October, occurring once a week before school. “The biggest thing we focus on in practice is conditioning. When the girls play, they need to be able to maintain good stamina, and it starts at practice,” Coach Brumund explained. The girls worked on conditioning such as running, as well as many other drills in order to build stamina and get back into the swing of things after coming back from the long break.

Shortly following, the team began the pre-season, where practices became more frequent, occurring four days a week for two hours each. League games started in early January and have continued ever since. With spending so much time with each other, the family-like bond between players only grows stronger just as their trust in one another, reflecting on the field.

As the girls face the challenges of being on

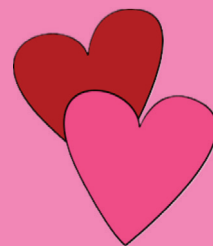
a team undergoing a reinvented culture, there is no stopping them as they strive to be their best. A trusted bond in each other has taken hold over the team, as it is safe to say this team has elevated beyond many expectations, ultimately leading to the most successful season the girls have had in four years. The team only hopes to continue growing and become stronger and stronger, both as athletes and as friends.



The girls soccer team came together as friends and athletes to improve themselves as dedicated players. Overall, their effort was evident throughout the season.



Questions From the Heart



Information and photos gathered by the Platinum Press Staff

What is your best pickup line?

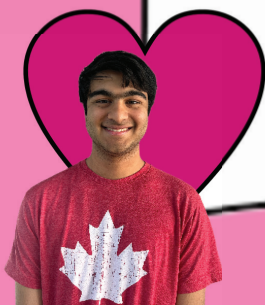
What has been the most romantic gesture you have

What is your favorite love song lyric?

What are your Valentine's Day plans?

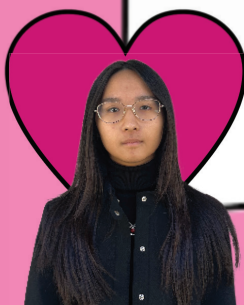
"Girl, are you copper telluride? Because you're CuTe."

- Nikhil Jadav '24



"Watching the sunset at the beach, as they collected seashells for me."

- Amy Pham '25



"I'd give the world to her as long as my heart's still beating."

- Jeanne Huerta '24



"I plan on going out to dinner with my girlfriend and having a jolly old grand time!"

- Gustavo Ochoa '24



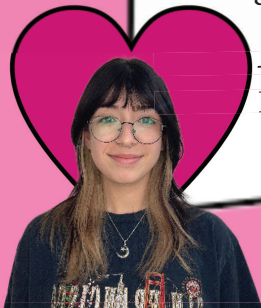
"Do you play soccer? Because you look like a keeper."

- Joshua Agostini '24



"A crush at the time annotated a book I wanted to read and gave it to me as a gift."

- Annalise Luna '24



"Walk me home, put your hand in mine. At the gate, stop and say, 'Be my Valentine.'"

- Kitty Lehner '26



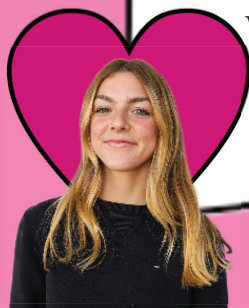
"Me and my friends are going to ... bake cookies, watch rom-coms, and play games."

- Tia Halteh '26



"If you were a Transformer, you'd be Optimus Fine."

- Miley Wojcik '25



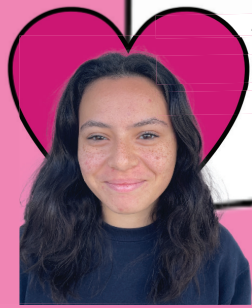
"My boyfriend made me a surprise picnic."

- Chanel Cannon '27



"If the whole world was watching, I'd still dance with you."

- Karlee Vasquez '25



"I will be trying to make strawberry tanghulu with my sister."

- Dejanella Zapot Chagala '24



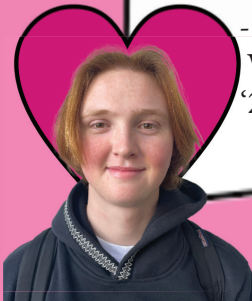
"Are you a fart? Because you blew me away."

- Corbin Frutos '25



"My girlfriend made a painting of my name and put ... things I say around it."

- Bodie Wichert '24



"If you could see my thoughts, you would see our faces."

- Malia Fox '25



"I'll be eating all the Valentine's chocolate, candy, and food there is, because I love food!"

- Julian Williams '24

