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# THE CHARGER ACCOUNT

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SCAN FOR PAST ISSUES



# SCHOOL NEWS

DESIGN BY IMRAN SHAIKH

## VDK's "Badshah Roy"



Imran Shaikh

Editor-in-Chief

Since 2016, Senior **Vishnu Dhev Kumar "VDK" Yogendran** has been posting videos on his YouTube channel, VDK Productions. After experimenting with a multitude of mediums over the years—from dabbling in comedy sketches and gaming and even having a not-so-brief stint as a rapper—VDK has begun to gravitate towards a new type of creative content: filmmaking.

"From a young age, I aspired to be an actor. However, as I started to watch more films, I realized I wanted to be more than just a part of stories; I wanted to create them. As culturally diverse movies are being pushed to the forefront in Hollywood, I aim to create similar movies that feature my own Tamil culture," VDK said.

VDK tinkered with different genres in his pursuit to create a memorable film: his first short film, "Murugesu," delved into the world of horror, while his subsequent project, "The Wheel," took a more dramatic and thoughtful perspective. However, it is with his third short film, "Badshah Roy," that VDK seems to have found his calling, blending styles from both American and Tamil films.

"I was watching YouTube videos where stuntmen and action choreographers would review fight scenes from movies when the idea to create an action movie dawned on me. I was most excited to film the fights, so I choreographed them first, and then built a plot around them," VDK said.

VDK also enjoyed filming with friends—most of the characters in "Badshah Roy" were based on his close friends. The titular character Badshah Roy was inspired by Senior **Abhishek Roy** while the main antagonist, Sultan Shaikh, was inspired by yours truly, Senior **Imran Shaikh**.

Despite an almost nonexistent film budget, "Badshah Roy" had a successful premiere at the school's Cinema Club, drawing in over 50 students. The crowning achievement, however, is the multiple awards that "Badshah Roy" has won; VDK earned "Best Debut Short Film" and "Best Debut Director" at Nitin International Film Festival in Malaysia, the country he was born and raised in, "Best Mobile Short Film," "Best US Short Film" and "Best Debut Director" at Kodaikanal International Film Festival in Tamil Nadu, India and "Best Debut Director/Short Film" and "Best Debut Short Film" at the Kollywood International Film Festival in Chennai, India.

"I plan on pursuing film in college and hopefully afterwards as well. I actually just released a sequel to 'Badshah Roy': 'Badshah V Sultan,' which delves into the relationship between Badshah Roy and Sultan Shaikh. It is explosive and ruthless, so I suggest you check it out," VDK said.

## Saying goodbye to Mrs. Sedgwick and Ms. Young

Ariel Lee

Staff Writer

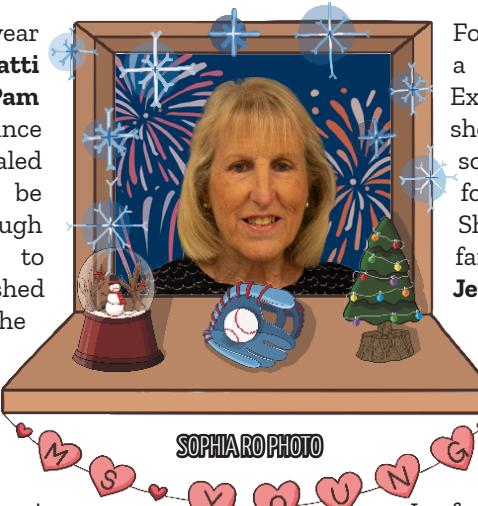
As the school year comes to an end, **Patti Young**, Bank, and **Pam Sedgwick**, Attendance Office, have revealed that they will be retiring. Although it is unfortunate to see these cherished members of the staff go, both have exciting plans ahead of them.

Young has been working at the school bank since October 2003, and has enjoyed fostering close relationships with the students and staff; her fondest memory is starting the Every 15 Minute Program, a 2-day program designed to educate students about the reality of drinking and driving.

"Coming into this job, I never expected it to open up a whole new world for me. Getting to attend weddings and baby showers of former students and developing long-lasting relationships with them has been such a blessing," Young said.

Young hopes that she was able to teach students the importance of having fun in the midst of the taxing rush to get good grades, get into college and keep up with social media. To spread this joy, Young loved doing crafts with her Teacher's Assistants (TA's), affectionately called Bankettes.

"My most memorable moments with Ms. Young are the holiday parties and activities she would host for us.



SOPHIA R PHOTO

For example, she had a Christmas Polar Express party, and she always prepared something special for our birthdays. She has become like family to us," Junior **Jessica Huh** said.

After retirement, Young wants to spend more time with her family, travel and finish incomplete projects.

In fact, her first trip is already planned to Italy to attend the wedding of a former student.

Differing from Young, Sedgwick was originally a stay-at-home mom before coming to the school. When her children started middle school at Bret Harte, she took the position of Community Club President. Then, in 2001, Sedgwick began working with special needs students as an Instructional Associate. Later, she shifted to working in the office as a Clerical Office Advanced, which eventually led to her current role as an Attendance Technician in August 2004.

Sedgwick's fondest memories included making life-long friendships with the staff and receiving the



SAACHI BASAVARAJU ART

MRS. SEDGWICK

"Employee of the Year" award in 2018. She has enjoyed getting to know the students and teaching them to be confident in their decisions.

"I hope that I helped encourage students to strive to succeed in any situation. My best piece of advice to the students is to enjoy their youth and maintain a positive outlook when facing any challenge that may arise in their path," Sedgwick said.

After her retirement, Sedgwick plans on traveling more with her husband and spending more time with her grandchildren. She would also like to live in the moment to enjoy the time she has.

"I will miss how happy Mrs. Sedgwick made the entire attendance office and how she would greet me with a smile every day. Being her TA has also improved my ability to talk to strangers," Senior **Daniel Kouchesfahani** said.

Students hope that Sedgwick and Young will enjoy their time after retirement and be able to fulfill the goals they were not able to achieve before. Both staff members will be greatly missed for their bonds with both staff members and students. The school would like to thank you, Mrs. Sedgwick and Ms. Young, for all your hard work through the years!

## Battle of the Den: Powderpuff edition

Mahika Khosla and Niru Shrivakumar

Staff Writers

At the last minute, the seniors desperately attempted to overcome the uphill battle against the quick-footed freshmen. Yet the defense of the new class was too much for the soon-to-be graduates to handle, and ultimately, the Class of 2028 was crowned champion. As the freshmen team huddled together for the championship picture of the school's annual Powderpuff tournament, excitement and spirit charged through the crowd in the stands.

In the American football variation known as "Powderpuff," female participants play touch or flag football rather than full-contact football. Powderpuff was first created to promote gender equality in sports and provide a chance for girls to engage in football. Over time, it has developed into a tradition across many American high schools.

The school's tournament consisted of a series of flag football games played between girls of different classes from April 23 and April 26. Each grade's team was coached by players on the school's football team, and the games followed regular 7-on-7 flag football rules, where players must pull the flag that is tied around a player's waist to prevent the team from advancing.

Powderpuff was organized by **Meg Walsh**, Activities Director and Leadership Coordinator, along with an ASB committee that was led by Sophomore **Hadley Salom**. The committee created promotional videos and posters to advertise the tournament to students, who simply had to sign up and fill out a waiver to compete. Still,

Salom explained there were very few sign-ups at first, and students often waited until the last minute to submit their waivers.

Despite these initial troubles, Powderpuff still maintained a significant player and audience turnout this year. The tournament took place at the Pat Tillman Stadium during lunch, and many students visited the stands to watch.

"I enjoyed watching my friends play in the tournament; it was a great way to spend my lunch. However, I would improve the games by involving more schools and increasing advertising in order for a larger audience to attend," Freshman **Kasey Hasiguchi** said.

Students participating in the tournament created custom jerseys correlating with each grade's team. For example, juniors donned white and blue shirts with a pink Texans logo and their names and class

year on the back, Junior **Ninweh Murad** explained.

"I participated in Powderpuff again this year because my friends were doing it after we had a lot of fun last year! It was a great experience to play and work with the coaches—they helped us be the best we could be and led us to win third place," Junior **Liv Bunea** said.

This year, the school took Powderpuff one step further by partnering with Pioneer High School in a final Battle of the Den Powderpuff game. On May 3 at Pioneer High School, each school created their own girls football team—with players from all grades—and competed against their rivals in a high intensity match. Pioneer defeated Leland's team 35-0.

"After attending the Battle of the Den game, I felt really proud of the girls on the team; even though they lost, their spirit and excitement was at its peak and everyone was ready to play. I also enjoyed being able to meet kind people from the opposing team," Sophomore **Tara Sarhangnejad** said.

Regardless of the loss, the Battle of the Den game was an entertaining addition to the Powderpuff tournament, bringing large audiences from both schools. The Battle of the Den game will occur next year, with Powderpuff's legacy continuing to make a meaningful impact on the culture of the school.



SHRINMOJEDI PHOTO



GATTAHEART

**Vira Patil**

Staff Writer

## San Francisco's fentanyl epidemic

An urgent dilemma overshadows San Francisco's splendor—the alarming surge in fentanyl, a drug so potent that just two milligrams is considered a lethal dose and is responsible for approximately 73% of accidental deaths from overdosing, per Texas Health and Human Services. This February, San Francisco Chronicle reported that a staggering 49 accidental deaths caused by drug overdoses involved fentanyl.

First introduced in 1959, fentanyl was initially marketed as an intravenous anesthetic and synthetic opioid, yet was later discovered to be approximately 50 times stronger than heroin and 100 times stronger than morphine. According to ABC7 News, 80% of drug overdose deaths in San Francisco were accredited to fentanyl

in 2023—making it the single most deadly drug in the city. As a result, police activity rapidly increased, with California law enforcement seizing a staggering 62,224 pounds of fentanyl through financially oriented investigations, increased international cooperation and a renewed emphasis on reducing drug demand.

"Ending the fentanyl crisis is crucial to prevent the dangerous impacts of addiction on individuals, families and the community of San Francisco. For example, a decrease in overdoses could prevent overcrowding hospitals in the area, allowing for more availability for healthcare workers to address other important issues," Junior Lyla Windsor said.

However, fentanyl is not the only drug present in San Francisco; the illegal distribution of substances such as lysergic acid diethylamide—a popular hallucinogenic drug—methamphetamine—a synthetic drug that acts as a stimulant and hallucinogen—and gamma-hydroxybutyrate—a nervous system depressant that produces feelings of euphoria and sociability—are also involved in San Francisco's burgeoning drug crisis. Collective drug use can hinder future productivity and amplify burdens such as depression and other psychosocial dysfunctions on the community.

"Analyses have shown that fentanyl has been laced into other drugs, making these mixtures very potent and dangerous. Also, it can be cheaply ordered online, which makes it easily accessible to young people, including teenagers. This is a grave concern since many young people are still grappling with social issues post-pandemic," Rohini Neelavar, Math Department said.

The fentanyl epidemic is most severe in San Francisco's crowded, unhygienic and homeless-packed Tenderloin neighborhood. Such conditions are a result of prevalent connections between drugs and homeless populations. According to the American Addiction Center, nearly 33% of the homeless have currently or previously grappled with either alcohol or drug addictions.

The addictive properties of drugs can alter brain activity and make it extremely difficult to quit, which may lead users to take drastic measures to access them illegally. Despite actions taken by the San Francisco Police Department to stop any further spread of fentanyl, the issue is still on the rise.

LILIANA CHAI ART

## Almaden's Barnes & Noble turns its last page

James Li

Staff Writer

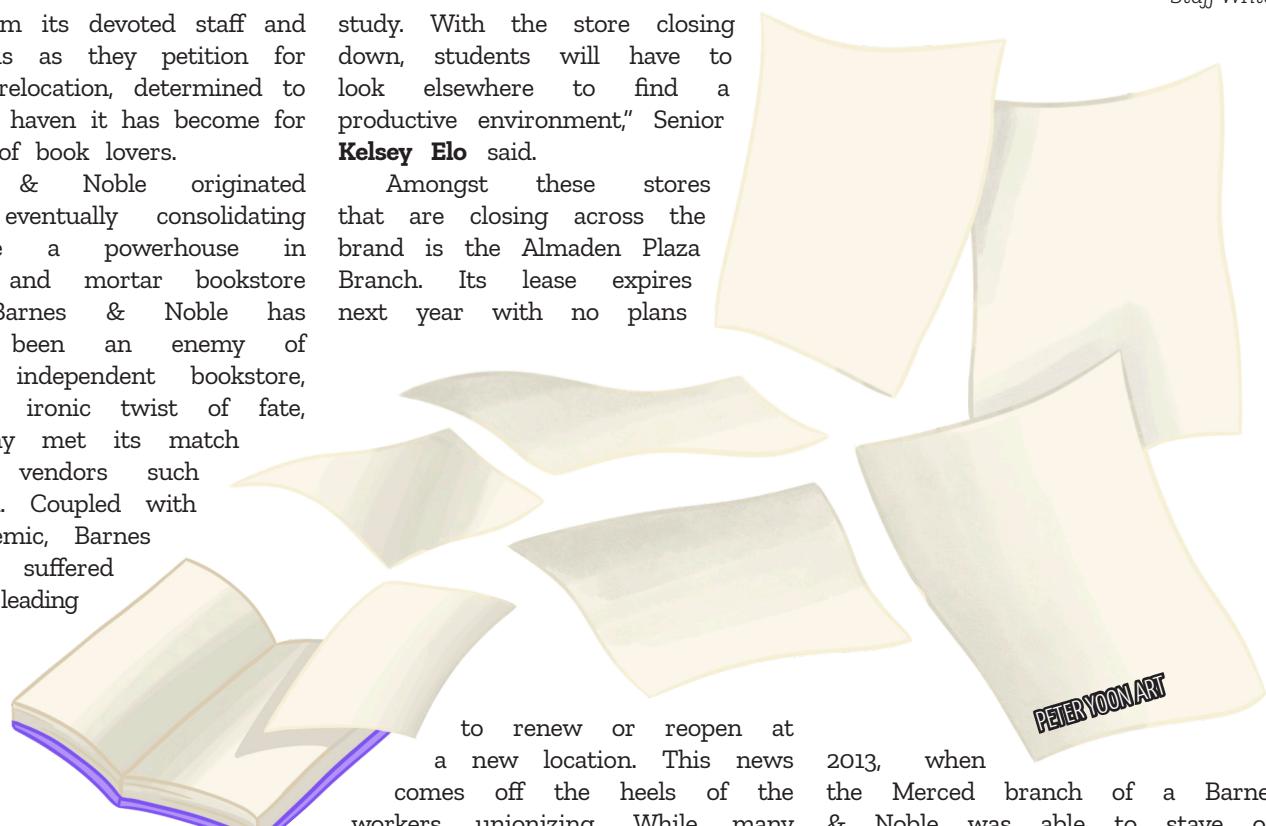
Amidst the bustling streets of Almaden Plaza, an iconic beacon of literary sanctuary faces an uncertain fate. After a quarter-century of enriching the community with its vast shelves and cozy café, the local Barnes & Noble store location stands on the brink of closure come the new year. However, a fervent rallying cry has

emerged from its devoted staff and loyal patrons as they petition for the store's relocation, determined to preserve the haven it has become for generations of book lovers.

Barnes & Noble originated in 1886, eventually consolidating to become a powerhouse in the brick and mortar bookstore business. Barnes & Noble has historically been an enemy of the small independent bookstore, but in an ironic twist of fate, the company met its match in online vendors such as Amazon. Coupled with the pandemic, Barnes & Noble suffered heavily, leading

study. With the store closing down, students will have to look elsewhere to find a productive environment," Senior Kelsey Elo said.

Amongst these stores that are closing across the brand is the Almaden Plaza Branch. Its lease expires next year with no plans



to waves of closures across the country. Dozens of locations have shut their doors for good, citing reasons such as expensive leases preventing the store from operating in an economically feasible manner and businesses buying out the space to open other stores.

"Barnes & Noble provides a comfortable and inviting environment for students such as myself to

renew or reopen at a new location. This news comes off the heels of the workers unionizing. While many hoped that this would lead to better working conditions and livable wages, the decision also put the location on the corporate chopping block as a target for closure. The closure will impact not only the employees' lives, but also harm booklovers' shopping experience in Almaden.

In an attempt to combat this closure, employees of the Barnes & Noble are urging the community to support their efforts to save the store, putting together an online petition to find a new location. This tactic has been used in the past, most prominently in

2013, when the Merced branch of a Barnes & Noble was able to stave off closure through community support. These combined efforts led to a reduced lease that enabled the store to stay open.

"Community support is especially important in instances like this because it displays to the companies that the store is valuable to the community it serves," Junior Shrivats Sudharsan said.

The Almaden branch hopes to replicate these successes, with aims to either relocate or establish new terms for the lease. Regardless, the community stands to suffer a large loss if the store is to close down indefinitely.

# OPINIONS



## THE CHARGER ACCOUNT

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CATHERINE NGUYEN ART



A teenager with long, shaggy hair and a colorful tie-dye shirt strikes a pose with a peace sign. Their attire is completed with a vibrant bandana, sunglasses and ripped jeans—epitomizing the iconic image of a hippie. However, this superficial visual stereotype washes over the social movements and radical ideas that hippies once championed. While many people today idolize hippies for their outward appearance, they often fail to remember the social change that hippies brought, an issue that perpetuates in the narrative of many counterculture movements.

Countercultures are ways of life or thinking that reject prevailing ideologies and societal norms. Despite having existed for centuries—take the Enlightenment of the 17th and 18th centuries—the hippies of the 1960s remain one of the most prominent examples. Hippies were youth who departed from mainstream values, promoting a carefree lifestyle through psychedelic drugs, relaxed sexual customs and rock 'n' roll. Furthermore, they opposed conservatism on issues like racial segregation, gender inequality and the Vietnam War. Such values of embracing racial and cultural diversity live on today, yet hippies are now more widely known for their fashion due to its representation of freedom of expression and deviation from the mainstream.

Today, a big player in the appeal of modern countercultures is the "coolness" factor of rebelling against societal norms. People often think engaging in counterculture makes them appear more self-assured as it demonstrates independent thought and refusal of conventional ideas. Additionally, the fear of observing a monotonous and predictable life drives people to stem from the mainstream.

Many businesses capitalize on this idea by marketing themselves as nonconformists to attract buyers who seek to defy societal norms. One such brand is Urban Outfitters, a chain retailer. They utilize social media, trendy magazines and strategic store locations in metropolitan areas rather than in shopping malls to portray the image of an independent retailer—despite being a large mainstream brand. Another example is Converse, which appeals to countercultures by associating itself with punk, rock and alternative music. These corporations take advantage of countercultures for profit rather than to genuinely support their causes. Ironically, co-opting

counterculture through marketing runs counter to the anti-materialism ethos of countercultures. Anti-consumerism consumers who are attracted by this marketing still feed large corporations—the very entities they oppose.

This brings the question of whether the nonconformist ideals of modern countercultures are just a facade. As more people gravitate towards a counterculture, ideas that initially seem unique gain traction until they are integrated into the mainstream and are once again rejected by countercultures. According to The Monthly Review, when Starbucks first opened in the 1970s, it positioned itself as a countercultural alternative to traditional coffee chains, emphasizing its commitment to customer friendliness and fair trade. While Starbucks continues to try to portray this image today, its evolution into a mainstream coffee chain that serves millions of customers a week makes it emblematic of the consumer culture it originally sought to defy. These cycling trends undermine the sustainability of marketing to countercultures as anti-consumerism in nature since customers turn away once the brand starts gaining mainstream popularity.

Countercultures negatively influence the perspectives of individuals when they prioritize the pursuit of "cool" uniqueness rather than their original purpose of promoting social progress. This constant pursuit of uniqueness can often result in the pitfalls of labeling anything mainstream as inherently flawed, which pressures people to act unique or join countercultures for superficial reasons. For example, "pick-me girl" culture is centered on women criticizing feminine stereotypes to show that they are "not like other girls." The stereotypical "pick-me" tries to defy mainstream femininity by rejecting makeup, liking sports and hanging out with guys, but their actions are calculated to gain male attention.

"Detracting from the mainstream through hobbies or fashion does not make you any more special than others. Yet, people have a tendency to act pretentious about being non-mainstream, such as 'pick-me's. I am not against 'pick-me's if they are acting on their genuine personality,

but they become problematic when they put other people down for being mainstream, or try to change themselves to appeal to others," Freshman Dahlia Peralta said.

Furthermore, countercultures have a tendency to marginalize certain groups or promote elitism. The hippies of the 1960s were mainly white middle-class individuals as they held stable socioeconomic positions, which allowed them to experiment with communal living and hedonistic lifestyles. Similarly, the modern anti-consumerism counterculture is less accessible to low-income individuals; products from independent stores are often much more expensive than those from big brands. Some anti-consumerism advocates participate in the counterculture simply to display their status through buying niche items. However, other members of the counterculture truly believe in the harm of consumerism, and their opinions should not be invalidated.

Another counterculture that has strayed from its original intentions is the thrifting movement. Recently, thrifting saw a massive increase in popularity, with the global second hand apparel market growing three times faster than the overall apparel market according to a study by ThredUp, an online thrifting platform.

"Many early 2000s movements like punk, goth and alternative fashion relied on thrifting. However, after thrifting went viral, it lost its original purpose of being an opportunity for people to buy unique items at a low price. Now, many thrift stores are being filled with generic clothing; they are so popular that prices have inflated," Sophomore Anna Kochanska said.

Above all, the essence of countercultures should be to challenge social norms and act as a catalyst for change. Countercultures remain essential to driving social progress and providing a space for people to express their unique perspectives. Rather than trying to capitalize on passing trends to stay relevant, it is important that countercultures stay true to their original purposes.

# From skin to pixels: The rise of AI models

Eleanor Gil

Artificial intelligence (AI) has entered a new realm: the modeling and fashion industry. Flaunting pristine skin and bright apparel, two unique AI and virtual models have debuted on the front cover of the 2024 fashion magazine *Great British Brands*.

There are two types of digital models quickly rising in popularity: virtual and AI. Virtual models are digital recreations of real-life models, such as Alexsandrah Gondora, who was recently recreated digitally on *Great British Brands*. In contrast, AI models are made completely from scratch pixel by pixel, such as Shudu, who became the world's first completely AI-generated supermodel after debuting in *Great British Brands*. Shudu has since campaigned for luxury brands such as Balenciaga, Lexus and Balmain.

The Diigitals, which is the creator of Shudu, is the first all-digital modeling agency. In order to create Shudu, the Diigitals first took photo shoots of multiple real models wearing the garments, and then used generative AI image makers like Midjourney—a major AI art creator, alongside Dall-E—to render these images transparent and overlap them. As per lifestyle magazine *Country & Town House*, overlapping is a critical step in 3D image processing because it provides more areas for the system to detect matched keypoints; the more keypoints, the more lifelike the 3D model is. Afterward, the product is refined through editing, and credits are given to people who performed the creative input and technical processes.

Shudu's creator anticipates the boundless potential of AI and virtual models in the fashion industry. The rise of these models would likely foster various benefits for modeling agencies or the brands they promote, the models themselves and even the environment, ABC News reports. For one, using AI models rather than humans provides absolute creative control—whether it be for fashion or aesthetics—without paying for physical photoshoots and recruitment. Apparel brands can also avoid having to manufacture and ship their clothes to the models, saving money and promoting environmentalism.

Moreover, using virtual models such as Alexsandrah still requires agencies to financially compensate the models' human counterparts. According to Florida Atlantic University, some models can experience poor mental health due to the stress of having to maintain their physique, which often includes strict dieting and intensive workouts. Passive income through the digital counterparts may help alleviate such stress while allowing models to save further by reducing their travel expenses, as reported by BBC.

AI models could also address a broader range of consumer needs and demographics by showcasing different body shapes, allowing people to make more informed purchases. Yet, there exist concerns regarding whether the AI breakthrough will

take away from human jobs. For example, employment rates and demand for makeup artists and photographers could decrease in the modeling industry, and competition between models for jobs would likely increase because there would be fewer recruitment opportunities, per BBC.

"As people incorporate AI into industries such as modeling, I would not be surprised to see human originality and creativity take a toll because AI is working for them," Freshman **Shine Lee** said.

While AI models may allow diversity to flourish on the covers of magazines, actual inclusivity and representation may decrease by funneling job opportunities away from minority models.

"Upon seeing the *Great British Brands* cover, my initial wonder shifted to concern because as the use of AI models expands, I fear AI may replace jobs for real-life minority models," Sophomore **Jennifer Hirota** said.

It is expected that AI will thrive in this digital age, opening up new opportunities for innovation while also creating ethical dilemmas. The development of AI models, and its further expansion into the fashion industry, only further widens the discussion around the use of AI to new fields and scales.



## Jojo Siwa's edgy rebrand

Amie Ahn

In August 2021, internet celebrity Jojo Siwa announced her decision to ditch her signature bow. This also marked the end of an era for many teen girls who grew up watching the former "Dance Moms" star. Siwa's dramatic comeback on April 5 with the release of a new song "Karma" garnered attention for its dark, punk tones—a drastic change from her previous bright and colorful imagery.

Siwa has been in the public eye since she was nine years old, making her first appearance in 2014 in the reality show "Dance Moms" and later signing a deal with Nickelodeon. Known for her signature high ponytail and oversized bow, she released upbeat pop music that promoted positive messages and themes for a young audience. For instance, in her 2016 debut song "Boomerang," she sang of not caring about what others think and staying true to oneself.

Her new song "Karma" marks an immediate departure from this previous concept. In the music video, Siwa dons a mesh leather one-piece and heavy, dark eye makeup inspired by KISS, a metal rock band. She emphasizes her drastic transition by embodying a "bad girl" persona.

"After being on 'Dance Moms,' Siwa built a colorful and lively image, and she was obligated to constantly act childish throughout her teenage

years. As she got older, she probably wanted to break away from this image," Freshman **Aastha Dhandha** said.

Siwa also highlighted her LGBTQ+ pride in the video by having women actors play her love interests. In an interview with Billboard, she expressed wanting to start a new genre of music based on her experiences as a queer artist, referring to it as "gay pop."

However, after a clip from the interview went viral, many criticized Siwa for ignoring other boundary-breaking queer music artists that came before her, such as Lil Nas X and Elton John. After a TMZ interview brought up the recent backlash to Siwa, she responded

by acknowledging the gay pop icons who had come before her, clarifying that she just hoped to make gay pop a more official genre. She also expressed exasperation in regards to receiving large amounts of hate.

Jojo Siwa encountered more criticism when the original version of "Karma," sung by Brit Smith, a singer popular in the early 2000s, became popular on the internet. Once it was revealed that "Karma" was not an original song, many accused Siwa of unrightfully taking credit for it. These stealing accusations were denied by Siwa and eventually addressed by Smith through a video posted on TikTok, where Smith reiterated that Siwa had not stolen her song. However,

Smith's version of the song still remains ranked higher on iTunes.

Siwa's recent rebrand has also brought to light how female artists have to constantly reinvent themselves to maintain fame. For example, pop icon Taylor Swift is known for having changed her persona many times, from country singer-songwriter to uptown girl to an edgy, moody concept. Many other female artists such as Madonna and Lady Gaga also accompany the release of new albums with a change in stylistic choices. While all artists feel an obligation to stand out from anything done before, reinvention is especially emphasized for women in the music industry. It seems the industry today focuses more on image and appearance than music and talent in women artists, pressuring these artists to always maintain a captivating image, per The Women's Network.

"Jojo Siwa utilized this comeback as a way to show her development as an artist and also gain a lot of public attention. Since she accomplished her past achievements at such a young age, Siwa likely felt the need to keep outdoing her old persona," Sophomore **Dori Ardenboim** said.

Ultimately, Jojo Siwa's evolution is one of many conceptual changes that female artists have made to stay in the industry spotlight. Ditching her bright child star image, Jojo Siwa may be entering a new "bad girl" era that is here to stay. Whether the change continues to receive hate or not, it seems that the publicity may keep her songs on the charts.

Azuma Japanese Cuisine



Anna Yue

Staff Writer

As night drapes a sheet of darkness over the sky, a glimpse of light remains aglow in the secluded plaza near Cupertino Main Street. Within the warmth stands Azuma Japanese Cuisine, a time-honored restaurant offering not only a wide variety of traditional Japanese dishes, but also a private space for anyone hoping to heal through a heartwarming meal.

The restaurant's simplistic, traditional Japanese aesthetics caught my eye from afar during a breezy night. Filled with primarily neutral-toned decorations such as bamboo window blinds, paper-lined lanterns and thin Noren curtains sectioning different areas, the exceptionally soothing ambience provided me with a moment of relaxation after a long day.

Upon being seated, I was greeted with a warm bowl of miso soup and introduced to the restaurant's diverse menu, ranging from udon, cutlets and stews to a collection of over 70 types of sushi rolls. Overwhelmed by the countless options, I went along with the recommendation of the waiter, settling on the Under The Sea Roll and the Shrimp Tempura entree.

Featuring three different types of freshly-cut fish, the Under the Sea Rolls did not disappoint. Topped with tobiko, or flying fish roes, each of the sliced sashimi—including tuna, salmon and unagi—flawlessly complemented the pieces of yellowtail and avocado inside the sushi rolls.

Additionally, the deep-fried Shrimp Tempura was able to wholly preserve the natural taste of the shrimp and add a layer of crunch to the dish without being overly greasy. The dish was also served with deep fried green beans, broccoli, carrots and, my personal favorite, pumpkins. Ultimately, every entree my group ordered, including the savory Beef Tofu Udon and the tangy BBQ Rolls, held up to the restaurant's premium standard for flavor.

From their high quality of ingredients to welcoming service and unique ambience, Azuma Japanese Cuisine has easily become my go-to Japanese restaurant. As I plan to return and explore more of their menu, I strongly recommend this restaurant to anyone seeking a moment of relaxation for themselves or a warm and comforting meal to enjoy with their family and friends.

Azuma Japanese Cuisine (5/5)

how fan-taste-ic was it?



+ tasty food  
+ amazing ambience  
- slightly pricey

# INVESTIGATIVE REPORT: The cost of college

DESIGN BY BREANNA LU

## K.Dot's diss tracks



James Yu

Staff Writer

French Poet Joseph Roux's famous quote "The egoist does not tolerate egoism," holds true for Kendrick Lamar. On Drake's 2023 hit song "First Person Shooter," J. Cole boldly proclaimed himself, Drake and Kendrick Lamar as the great rappers of our generation. Lamar, disgusted at being held in the same regard as Drake, responded in a feature on Metro Boomin's "Like That," rapping that Drake and J Cole were below his pedigree. This exchange lit a flame between the rappers, leading Lamar to release four of his greatest works in years.

Returning fire against Drake's "Push Ups," Lamar released his first track, "Euphoria," where he tears into Drake's tendencies to code-switch whenever advantageous. Lamar soothes listeners into "Euphoria" with a calm, syncopated prologue before unleashing temerarious brass instrumentals, rapidly throbbing 808s and a swarm of slights targeted towards Drake's constitution. "Euphoria's" lengthy six minute runtime allows Lamar to continuously slam witty insults against Drake, while simultaneously presenting a cohesive prosecution.

Denying Drake a chance to respond, Lamar followed "Euphoria" with the release of "6:16 in LA," taunting that he has supporters within Drake's very own music label, OVO, over a futuristic synthetic beat. Drawing from his past album "DAMN's" mellifluous melodies, Lamar prepares a psychedelic melody in "6:16 in LA" centered around sending Drake into a permanent sleep.

Although Drake swiftly responded with a solid "Family Matters," Lamar retaliated with his third song "Meet the Grahams," where he brutally accuses Drake of being a pedophile, absent father and generally sick man over a chilling piano instrumental. Although the song melodically becomes repetitive, the deadly accusations Lamar lobbs at Drake fill in the gaps the song itself leaves.

Finally, in his most recent release, "Not Like Us," Lamar buries Drake under a snazzy beat and sassy lyrics. He chooses to dig Drake's grave in "Not Like Us" with a classic rap shovel, each diss tearing out the dirt which is entrenched in Drake's record label OVO.

As Lamar's ego skyrockets with each release, his actions are increasingly reintroducing the rap industry to conflict mediation through insults and a slick beat.

## K.Dot's diss tracks (5/5)

was i vibin'



- + Brutal insults
- + Diverse melodies
- + Consistent storytelling

Winston Chu

## Budgeting and planning for college

Staff Writer

Before millions of first year undergraduate students attend college, many of them apply for financial aid. These programs, along with other financial literacy initiatives, help students cover the costly expenses of college, paving the way for more opportunities during this transition.

Although tuition rates vary frequently among schools, tens of thousands of dollars are required to attend colleges. As a result of these high expenses, many individuals apply for financial aid programs to alleviate the burden. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, over 72% of undergraduates receive some form of financial aid. Non-federal financial aid is offered to more than 430,000 students in programs such as the College Scholarship Service Awards, as listed on their website.

Another crucial program is the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), which enables students to apply for federal grants, work-study and loans to help pay for college. However, this year, the Department of Education altered their application process, causing various obstacles and stress for families. Normally available around Oct. 1, the date was pushed to two months later

due to updates, and the form was slow with frequent site downtime for fixes. High traffic and glitches caused online forms to be accessible for only thirty minutes a day. The site was fully operational only by the middle of January, however the shortened time to fill out the form consequently left many students and families confused and frustrated with the platform.

Unfortunately, the delays did not only affect students; colleges also faced challenges. With significantly later requests, colleges had less time to create and plan financial aid packages. The limited amount of time for decisions and updates could impact the choices for application and award season.

"Although I applied for financial aid when going through my college application process, expenses were not a major factor for me. However, I can understand it playing a significant role," Senior **Warren Kong** said.

Furthermore, scholarships are also prevalent opportunities to access financial support, as many companies and organizations offer them to decrease student loans. College Board's BigFuture maintains a vast database of scholarship programs students can match and apply to. Additionally, the school also provides a myriad of scholarship resources under "College

and Career Support" on the website and on flyers posted throughout the halls. These resources, along with counselors, offer guidance to students searching for financial aid opportunities.

However, the expenses expand beyond tuition. There are many hidden costs of college that are overlooked—such as textbooks, class materials and transportation. Textbooks and other supplies are not covered by tuition fees and the average four-year university undergraduate spends around 1240 dollars on them, according to College Board. In addition, transportation expenses to reach social and food destinations beyond the meal plan only add to the financial burden. Being unaware of the full scope of these costs can exacerbate financial stress, hindering students' ability to navigate

which can prepare me for future careers. Also, I can use the money from my earnings to invest in stocks, pay off school debt and purchase a car. Owning a car is extremely beneficial, especially in college, as it reduces costs for additional transportation and can be very convenient to get to destinations on your own timeline," Senior **James Culberson** said.

Currently, financial literacy—the ability to understand financial management, budgeting and saving effectively, has exponentially decreased among younger generations, exacerbating poor college spending. Out of the most recent five generations, Generation Z possesses the lowest financial literacy rates. The Financial Literacy Crisis in America: 2023 report attributes the declining rates to the lack of personal finance classes in high school and similar institutions.

A study done by the Center for Financial Literacy ranked California, along with four



other states in America, very unsatisfactory for the financial literacy rates among high school students. However, seven other states were deemed proficient, including Utah, where the law requires students to take a state-administered personal finance exam. Their success can also be attributed to state law requiring financial literacy courses to be taught to high school children.

"Financial literacy is extremely important because understanding taxes, saving and spending can make a significant difference in our future. We should definitely learn about it in school, as learning early on can teach us how to handle student loans and credit cards and even prepare us to save for big purchases or emergencies. Plus, it will be stressful and scary when we are forced to learn it eventually, so it will be better if we have someone teach us beforehand," Sophomore **Saanvi Dhadesugur** said.

As the class of 2024 embarks on their college journey, it is crucial that they are financially prepared. Financial aid, scholarships and learning about financial literacy may help navigate through college life more effectively: students should learn money management alongside academics. Developing positive financial literacy habits during early adulthood can help set the stage for a successful lifetime of pursuing and achieving ambitious goals without stress.

through college successfully due to aggregating financial concerns.

"Unfortunately, I dread the hidden costs of college. At University of California, San Diego, I am getting a meal plan to cut down on food costs, and am staying on campus so I do not need a car. I plan to budget myself to save money on social activities, as the cost of tuition by itself is substantial," Senior **Steven Rapp** said.

To alleviate the high costs, many high school students work and apply for jobs to earn money before college and may continue to do so while attending. While there are various job positions for both teenagers and young adults, the majority gravitate to minimum wage jobs as a start to the workforce. Opportunities at local stores, fast food and quick eat restaurants may cover a portion of their expenses.

"Working at Safeway allows me to gain more experience talking to people, no matter the circumstances,

Joshua Yan

Sixteen-year-old Rabiat has just gone to sleep in her dormitory, where she is staying to take her end-of-the-year exams. But the sudden sound of gunshots and screaming wakes her from her slumber. Gunmen force open the door and drag her into their truck; her pleading is futile, and she is taken away into the night. More than 10 years have passed since that day, when the Nigerian Islamist jihadist group Boko Haram abducted 276 schoolgirls from the Christian town of Chibok, but victims like Rabiat are still feeling the effects of that fateful night.

Formed in 2002, Boko Haram has been involved in numerous militant operations and kidnappings, taking thousands of captives over the years. The

group has been known to target girls, whom they later force to become wives and mothers. Though initially aimed at violently opposing Western education—its name means “Western education is forbidden” in Hausa—the group pledged allegiance to the Islamic State in 2015 and in 2019 launched a campaign to establish a caliphate, a state governed by one political and religious leader under Islamic law.

Adding on to its long list of kidnappings, Boko Haram struck once more on March 7 this year, taking 287 primary and secondary school students from the town of Kuriga. In exchange for the children’s lives, Boko Haram demanded a ransom of 1 billion naira, equal to \$621,848. Nigerian President Bola Ahmed Tinubu stated that he had given orders not to pay the ransom, but according to CBS News, officials confirm that the government has made ransom payments in the past without public disclosure. State Governor Uba Sani said in a statement two weeks later that all the children had been

returned safely, but did not provide any details regarding the release.

“Boko Haram’s repeated attacks are a sign of weakness within the Nigerian government. They consistently been unable to adequately protect their citizens from terrorist attacks, perhaps due to corruption or a lack of resources,” Junior Aarush Zarabi said.

The 2014 incident garnered international attention, with social media users around the world spreading the #BringBackOurGirls hashtag to demand action from the Nigerian government. In response to the outrage, the Nigerian government began a major offensive against Boko Haram in the northeast later that year. Over the next two years, they negotiated the release of 103 girls. However, even with the government’s attempts and the successful escapes of almost 60 girls, 108 are still missing.

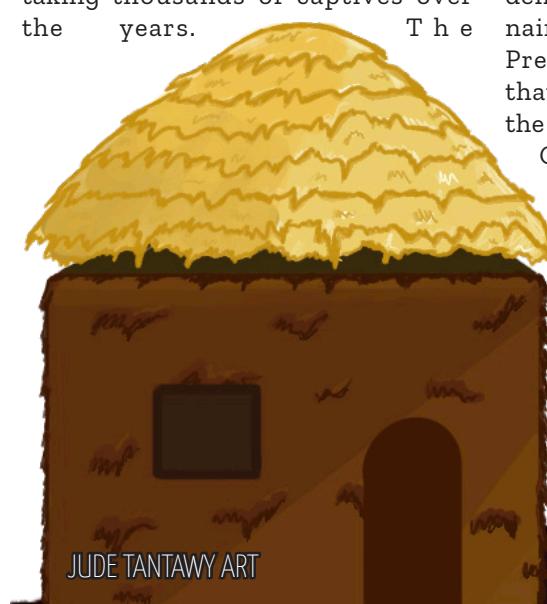
In captivity, Boko Haram coerced the girls to convert to Islam and later married them off to the men in their group. Many have been forced into sexual slavery, bearing children for Boko Haram. Others, as a way to combat

government forces, have been used as suicide bombers.

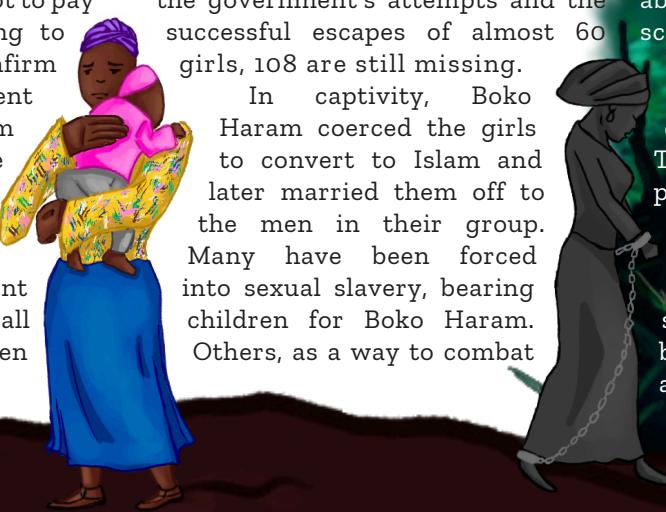
However, for those that have managed to escape, life still has not been easy. Besides the lasting trauma from their experiences as captives, many victims have been stigmatized by their communities upon returning. One victim reported being shunned for having become pregnant, while others recounted harsh disapproval from their parents for wanting to continue practicing Islam.

“Not enough is being done for the kidnapping victims. Instead of victim-blaming, more efforts and resources should be spent on making sure that the victims recover from their trauma,” Sophomore Maggie Shen said.

Boko Haram’s continued ability to carry out so many large-scale kidnappings is a testament to Nigeria’s instability and unpreparedness as a nation to deal with these sorts of attacks. The Nigerian government has pushed back the group’s territory to a small portion of the nation’s surface area, but whether or not they are in control is a different story entirely, as officials continue bending to Boko Haram’s demands as more victims disappear.



JUDE TANTAWY ART



Adrian Tomaszewski

Hordes of armored cars assemble outside the Mexican embassy in the heart of Quito, the capital of Ecuador. Moving swiftly, police tactical units advance upon the hacienda-style gates of the building with their guns drawn. This April 5 scene was no counterterrorism operation, but rather a raid on an internationally protected plot of land to capture the former second-in-command of the Ecuadorian government.

The target of the raid was Jorge Glas, the Ecuadorian vice president from 2013 to 2017. A running mate to his longtime friend and democratic socialist presidential candidate Rafael Correa, Glas assumed the vice presidency following a landslide election. While his tenure appeared unremarkable at first, just four months after leaving office in 2017, Glas was sentenced to six years in prison for taking \$13.5 million in bribes from a major Latin American conglomerate, Odebrecht. Further investigations into Glas exposed misuse of Ecuadorian oil contract funds and multiple other instances of bribery, landing him a total of 22 years in prison for his crimes against the public.

Despite his charges, complications related to habeas corpus and his safety in the

nation’s prison system led to Glas’s release on limited parole in 2023. This enabled him to request political asylum at the Mexican embassy in Quito when new charges were laid against him for embezzling an aid package following an earthquake. Glas believed that these, as well as some of his past charges, were examples of political persecution against him by the current Ecuadorian government.

Earlier, Mexican president Andrés Obrador had made an accusatory statement that suggested the Ecuadorian election was influenced by the murder of a presidential candidate, leading Ecuador to order the Mexican ambassador to Ecuador to leave the country—an action that demonstrates severe diplomatic disapproval. In response, Mexico granted Glas asylum on April 4, enabling him to flee Ecuador for Mexico. To prevent this, just one day later, the Ecuadorian National Police raided the Mexican embassy with a battering ram, ultimately arresting Glas and transferring him to a maximum security prison.

The incident took international relations by storm. Obrador quickly severed all diplomatic ties with Ecuador and announced an International Court of Justice (ICJ) investigation into Ecuador’s

actions, which defy international legal agreements. Since the Vienna Convention—ratified by nearly all countries in 1967—embassies have been granted special legal status as outposts of the represented country in the host country. This means that a person residing in the embassy is, for the purposes of the law, residing in the represented country. In turn, arresting a person staying there gravely defies international criminal law, and invading an embassy is similar to invading the territory of the represented country itself.

*“Since the Vienna Convention... arresting a person staying [in an embassy] gravely defies international criminal law, and invading an embassy is similar to invading the represented country itself.”*

“Embassy raids are only justified if they are the only remaining option to fix a diplomatic struggle or if the embassy is directly involved in an armed conflict. This case saw neither,” Junior Lara Harb said.

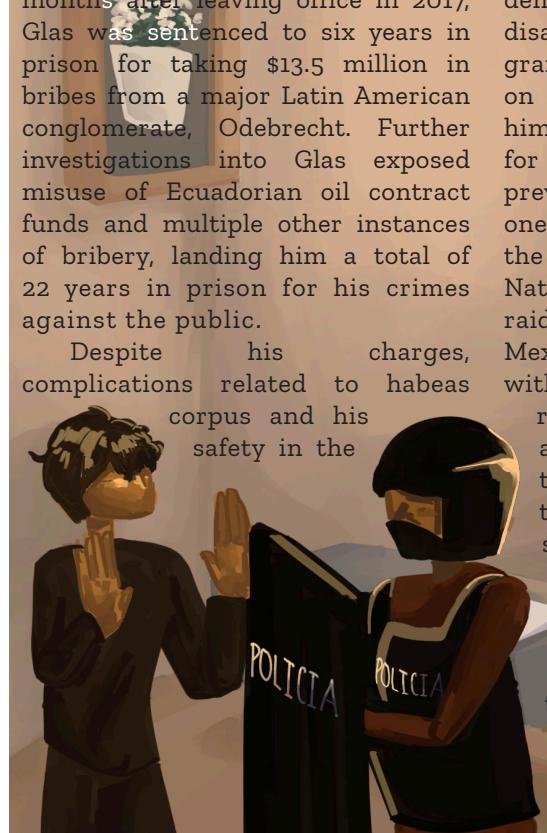
In response to the international controversy, Ecuador countersued Mexico at the ICJ for giving Glas—a convicted criminal in Ecuador—asylum under false pretenses. Still,

proper verdict is unlikely until at least 2026, as these cases typically take years to resolve.

Though embassy raids are rare, they are not unprecedented. Notable members of the small club of past incidents include the 1981 Cuban raid on an Ecuadorian embassy, which also targeted an asylum seeker, and the 1979 Iran Hostage Crisis, in which Iranian revolutionaries broke into the US embassy and held American diplomats hostage for over a year.

“The raid shows how incredibly high international tensions currently are in the world, especially with the conflicts in Ukraine and the Middle East. It exemplifies the extent some world leaders are willing to go to achieve political goals and their blatant disregard for international law,” Senior Alicia Kang said.

Despite the rarity and extremity of this type of order, the current Ecuadorian president, Daniel Noboa, supports the police’s action. He maintains his position as an extremely “tough-on-crime” president who is willing to cross the line to bring peace and justice to Ecuador, a country experiencing extreme violence and corruption with recent spikes in cartel activity. Noboa’s recent actions demonstrate how he is taking a dive into ever darker and deeper waters, with his stance on the embassy raid attracting criticism on the international stage.



CATHERINE NGUYEN ART

# COLLEGE DECISIONS

DESIGN BY HARRY KANG AND KYAN WANG



YUNSEO KIM ART

## Arizona State University

Ethan Aji  
Jordan Cutaran  
Vishnu Dhev Kumar Yogendran

## Brigham Young University-Idaho

Mason Williams

## University of Colorado Boulder

Alex Hemprich

## University of Idaho

Sophia Sick

## University of Nevada, Reno

Lauren Zera

## University of Oregon

Zachary Derse  
Riley DiNaro  
Isabella Klawitter  
Malina Villalozov  
Lia Yereslove

## University of Portland

Lauren Clarke

## University of Washington

Ameya Kulkarni  
Mia Nguyen  
Ved Rao  
Rohan Talwar

## Midwestern U.S.

### Aurora University

Megan Lamy

### Case Western Reserve University

Daniel Lin  
Jenny Park

### Indiana University Bloomington

Rhea Iyer

### North Dakota University

Seho Rah

### Northwestern University

Breanna Lu

### University of Cincinnati

Esha Shah

### University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

Ameya Ganesh

### University of Michigan

Vijay Tirumalai

### University of Wisconsin-Madison

Sunay Patel

Nathan Shen

### Washington University in St. Louis

Justin Etter

## Boston University

Claire Chen

Yifan Li

## Carnegie Mellon University

Andy Kwak

Hailey Tan

Terri Xin

## Duke University

Norah Shen

## Duquesne University

Kaitlyn Chen

## Haverford College

Judy Sohn

## MIT

Kristie Sue

## New York University

Sophia Huang

Mykayla Liu

Sandhya Ram

Karl Xing

Eric Yue

## Northeastern University

Carlo Del Rosario

Amir Salman

## Eastern U.S.

## Purdue University

Ishwari Diwan

Brandon Lee

Anika Pai

Sky Shih

Minjune Yang

## Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute

Kimberly Wang

## School of Visual Arts

Emelie Kim

## The Pennsylvania State University

Gianna Benjamin

## University of Connecticut

Matthew Phan

## University of Maryland, College Park

Aadish Kumbhare

## University of Pennsylvania

Alana Shin

Gilina Voon

\*These decisions are self-reported; therefore, this list does not reflect the entire senior class.

## Southern U.S.

### Emory University

Elysia Du

David Kim

Elaine Ju

Rhea Naik

### Rice University

Veer Khona

Lexi Xu

### Ringling College of Art and Design

Jude Tantawy

### The George Washington University

Dillon Gregg

YUNSEO KIM ART

"I love helping out during print night. It is so fun seeing everyone come together in order to produce a stunning final product of the newspaper. The environment is always warm and friendly, and I enjoy hanging out with my friends while checking articles."

- Freshman **Liliana Chai**



CLARE CHANG PHOTO

"I will always remember when Daniel called his mom during debrief. The room went completely silent and everybody listened in; we all wanted him to tell his mom 'I love you,' but he never ended up saying it. The comedic timing just made it hilarious."

- Junior **Adrian Tomaszewski**



WILSON YEN PHOTO



REEVE CHAN PHOTO

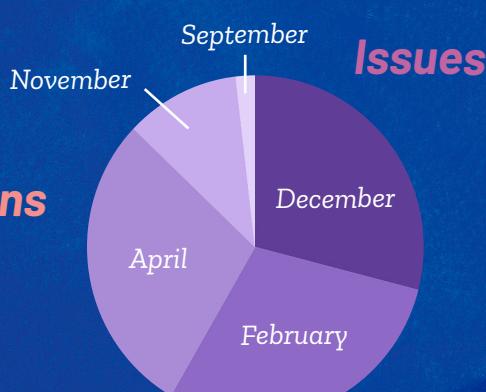
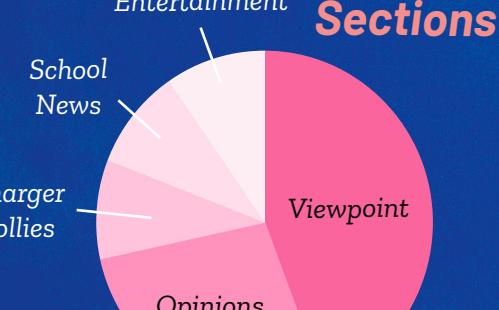
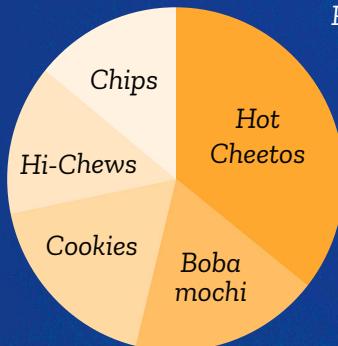
## Journalism by the numbers

<b>53</b> students	<b>14</b> sections	<b>6</b> issues	<b>2</b> class periods	<b>1</b> adviser
33% staff writers	27% artists	24% photo/media team	15% page editors	15% editorial board

Compiled by Winston Chu,  
Staff Writer

## The staff's top 5...

### Print Night Snacks



"My favorite journalism memory is when, after Landon and I annoyed Ms. Ngo essentially every sixth period for about a month, we brought her a custom cake from Safeway that said 'sorry we talk so much Ms. Ngo' on it and shared it with the class."

- Junior **Jay Li**

"What I love most about journalism are the people. Despite being from different departments, writers, artists and the media team always cooperate and collaborate. The students are very open and kind whenever you need help."

- Sophomore **Jane Hong**

# Journalism Review

SARA ZHAO ART



CLAIRE CHANG PHOTO



REEVE CHAN PHOTO

"I appreciate how journalism equips me with tools such as writing and time management skills, since these are transferable to real life and can help me succeed in my future career. The students are a tight-knit group, and people will always step up to help you when you need support. Under the guidance of the Editorial Board, I have made my writing more concise."

- Sophomore **Claire Chang**

"In journalism, I can talk to and be friends with so many different people who are fabulous experts at things I am not an expert at. It is really fun to work with other people who are so talented at different things!"

- Junior **Harry Kang**

"My favorite memory was filming the journalism TikTok videos. I had so much fun connecting with everybody and learning more about each member. They never fail to make me laugh so hard my stomach hurts."

- Junior **Shirin Moaledj**

"The flexibility of the class gives you time to fully put in effort and quality into your articles and be satisfied with the turnout. In the end, it is incredibly rewarding to see everyone's efforts come together."

- Freshman  
**Amie Ahn**

Antara Gangwal

School News and Entertainment Editor

From the first to last day of each print cycle, the journalism staff works diligently to highlight the voices, talents and experiences of the diverse student body. The class is divided into many departments—staff writers, artists, page editors, the photo-media team and the editorial board—yet each group, along with class advisor **Elaine Ngo**, English Department, is integral in bringing the finished newspaper to life.

A typical print cycle begins with story ideas, where the staff comes together to share potential article topics for the issue. After finalizing ideas with the editorial board, page editors develop detailed logsheets to design each section's assignments, and staff writers and artists draft the corresponding articles and art. Guided by edits from the editors-in-chief and art directors, these drafts are slowly perfected into a final product.

"Journalism allows writers to express their opinions and trains them to be succinct, persuasive and meaningful. Moreover, by enabling students to explore topics relevant to them, journalism excels at being both educating and entertaining for students to participate in," Sophomore **James Yu** said.

Yet the true magic happens at print night, the last Friday of the print cycle. Page editors, editors-in-chief and other staff members hole up inside J-5 from 3:20 p.m. to 11:30 p.m., the very last minute before the alarm bells ring. Amidst the chaos of trying to finalize 16 pages, the print night playlist—usually over 300 songs long—sets the background music, and an amalgamation of snacks are always present on the center table.

"I will always treasure the connections and friendships I have made in journalism, as we bond over our shared interests. Our mutual understanding of our community and goals creates a positive, connected environment," Junior **Lauren Wilson** said.

# OH CLASS OF 2024

Aralyn Connolly had to explain why you should not put lettuce in ramen to...

Lori Yang, who broke the fake legos of...

Nikole Ngo, who sent Valentines from fictional crushes to...

Ariya Acharya, who made a crepe cake with...

Claire Pham, who went prom dress shopping with...  
Kayla Choi, who never asked for AP Statistics homework from...

James Li, who went bowling with...

Carlo Del Rosario, who had a safely sanctioned boxing fight against...

Abhishek Roy, who ate "Badeshaah VSutan", "Fougbat"...

Dhruv Sawhney, who went to prom with...

Dharini Vamathevan, who enjoyed baking cookies with...

Jahan Garg, who ran cross country with...

Inseo Kim, who slurped undercooked cup noodles in the rain with...

Yunnah Moon, who went hiking after school on a random Monday with...

Kavya Desai, who was offended by being called short by....

Ryan Azuma, who enjoyed passionately cuddling with...

Ameya Ganesh, who was tyrannical while playing Monopoly with...

# NOVEMBER OF SHELLS

**Aadish Kumbhare**, who got mauled by elementary schoolers at Greystone with...

**Judy Sohn**, who dogsat for...

**Manasa Sriraj**, who blasted Bollywood songs while driving at midnight with...

**Sunia Li**, who was dubbed a middle-school lookalike off...

**Imran Shaikh**, who has a 100% win rate in "Super Smash Bros." against...

**Ayla Monserate**, who took maps in AP Literature with...

**Jordan Cutreran**, who played "Padshah Roy," directed by...

**Nia Wong**, who—  
only two years old when she met **Gilina Voon**.

**Rohan Talwar**, who—at her 18th birthday debut—danced with...

**Theona Lazarashvili**, who played Shell Shockers in class with...

**Vishnu Dhev Kumar Yogendran**, who made a mental health PSA for the Charger News with...

**Ameya Kulkarni**, who is going to be roommates at the University of Washington with...

**Medha Nemani**, who obsessed over BTS in middle school with...

# SENIOR BREAK

# EEKZEEK

DESIGN BY GWEN CARROLL AND HARRY KANG

Kavya,  
Your art was always on the next level and full of creative twists that showed off your diligence and talent. Your amazing skills and consistent timeliness with your edits made our pages pop, and your kind personality made you easy to work with. We wish you the best of luck at UCLA!



WE WILL  
MISS YOU

JANE HONG ART  
GILINA VOON PHOTO

Gilina,  
Your dedication to taking the perfect photos has helped us so much this past year. Your kindness and hard work were a breath of fresh air on the most stressful print nights and we hope you have a great time at UPenn!



Celina,  
Your dedication to photography both in and out of journalism has been a great inspiration to improve for all of us, and your ability to collaborate ensured smooth sailing. We are very grateful for your incredible work and communication this year and wish you a great time at SJSU!



James,  
Your skillful writing never failed to impress and we were grateful to have had you as a staff writer this year. Your creative voice made your writing lively and we will miss your sociability. Have a great time at Cal Poly Pomona!



Jude,  
We appreciate your consistency in coming to print night and helping us make last-minute art fixes. Your art skills made print nights much less stressful and helped our pages come out vivacious and eye-catching every time. Best of luck at Ringling College of Art and Design!



Kayla,  
Your beautiful art style and sheer dedication to your craft highlighted each and every page you worked on beautifully. Your infectious passion inspired us all to put our best foot forward, and we hope you keep it up in college!





# YEAR IN REVIEW

## OCTOBER 7 ATTACK (OCT. 7, 2023)

The Islamist paramilitary organization Hamas, designated as a terrorist group by numerous Western nations, launched a coordinated armed attack against Israel that killed 1,139 people—696 of those being Israeli civilians. The attack sparked a larger-scale war and ground invasion of Gaza by Israel, which received criticism for its civilian fatalities, currently numbering at over 35,000 reported deaths.

## TIKTOK BAN SIGNED INTO LAW (APRIL 24, 2024)

The Protecting Americans from Foreign Adversary Controlled Applications Act called for the ban of social networking apps determined to be a "foreign adversary controlled application." The act targeted TikTok and gave the app 270 days to be sold or reclassified.

## TOTAL SOLAR ECLIPSE (APRIL 8, 2024)

The solar eclipse drew in eager tourists hoping to view the rare event, which will not occur again in the U.S. until 2044. A total of 44 million people worldwide lived in the path of the eclipse.

## "LIKE THAT" RELEASED (MARCH 26, 2024)

Future and Metro Boomin's collaborative album "We Don't Trust You" featured the track that initiated the most recent feud between famous rappers Drake and Kendrick Lamar. The following diss tracks for days, garnering attention hop, but also the general dominated the charts from not only fans of hip-public.

## GTA6 TRAILER RELEASED (DEC. 4, 2023)

The widely anticipated trailer for Grand Theft Auto 6 (GTA6) was released, breaking the record for the most first-day views on a non-music YouTube video. The release of the game, which followed the notably successful GTA V, as well as information regarding it, was highly awaited.

## TESLA CYBERTRUCK DELIVERIES BEGIN (NOV. 30, 2023)

Tesla began the delivery of the iconic Cybertruck, known for its boxy exterior and cult customer following. The Cybertruck gained attention after a demonstration of the electric vehicle's "armor glass" failed.