

## PROM WAS A JACKPOT FOR THIS YEARS GRADUATING SENIORS



Photo by Dilshani Pathirana

SENIORS HAVING A GOOD TIME PLAYING GAMES AT PROM

By **Sydney Keane** and **Jessica Khandouzi**

Prom for the 2024 senior class was Sat. May 25 at the Santa Anita race track where everyone got to enjoy an exciting and thrilling night filled with fun and long-lasting memories.

“The venue was my inspiration [for prom]. When we go to pick out venues our junior year, we are given three locations to pick from. Santa Anita being one of them, has this show-stopping massive bar,” senior Kyra Smolik said. “With that in mind, I spoke with our event planner about what my idea of a modern Vegas theme could look like and it just clicked. I wanted to make sure that the theme wasn’t something cliché or unoriginal and something that hadn’t been done before at Elco.”

Prom was both outside and inside, but relatively

open with a large terrace being accessible to eat on and go down towards other activities. Many were worried about the location being so far, but when they arrived they were very pleased with how nice everything looked. The overall theme for this year’s prom was Jackpot, better explained as a Vegas and Casino night. There were lots of red and black detailing through the lighting, decorations, and activities.

“[My favorite activities were] the horse and carriage, karaoke, and the photo booth,” senior Natalie Mekjian said. “It was really fun and something I will definitely remember.”

There were a multitude of activities that have been seen at other school events and others that were specific to this theme. As usual, there was a photo booth, tattoo air-brush station,

Disk Jockey (DJ), food, Light-emitting diode (LED) ping pong tables, air hockey tables, and pool tables. However, to fit the jackpot theme, there was an Elvis impersonator, poker, roulette, black jack, Texas hold-em, karaoke, and a horse and carriage. Many people had a lot of fun with these activities, especially the ones that they hadn’t been able to do before.

“I feel excited [about prom being the last big event before graduation because] it is the last stepping stone,” senior Zoey Igbinigie said. “At the same time, I’m nervous because that means everything’s really over.”

Many students loved the Elvis impersonator. It wasn’t something that many were expecting and was a nice touch on the Vegas theme. Some were worried that the food wasn’t going to be good, but it was sur-

prisingly delicious with some of the best dishes being the chicken pesto pasta and the bread.

What was nice was the relatively large area and every corner you turn there was something to do.

Even while sitting and taking a break there was karaoke to watch and even the performers. One of the most memorable moments was the poker tables and the photo booth, there were so many social activities that it allowed people to mingle with people that they may not have spoken to before.

“The most memorable thing about prom was going with friends,” Mekjian said. “It wasn’t really about the music, location, or food, but more about the people that were there, taking pictures, having fun, and enjoying the last school event we will all be together for.”

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# Nationwide universities’ protests lead to mass arrests

By **Sylah Hill** and **Isabel Rose**

Multitudes of colleges worldwide have begun enforcing policies after protests over the Israeli-Palestinian conflict have increased on campuses.

In light of recent events occurring in Gaza, many people have begun protesting in favor of Palestine, but university students in particular have assembled to express their beliefs. Columbia University, Rutgers University and the University of Minnesota are among many universities that have acquired encampments of students expressing their shared beliefs.

Despite the rights to peaceably assemble and protest, universities have combated the students’ attempts and have started to enforce penalties for students who remain in the

encampments, which many believe is an infringement of constitutional rights.

While some of the protests have remained peaceful, several, including at University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) have escalated into violence and destructive actions such as setting off fireworks in encampments near wood planks and physical altercations between pro-palestinian and counter-protesters.

Other issues that arose included protesters blocking students from going to class, creating Anti-Jew zones, burning Israeli and American flags and replacing American flags on campuses to Palestinian ones.

The student protestors on Columbia University campus had three goals in mind when they initiated their protests: divesting from companies supporting Israel, more openness in the

university’s finances, and official pardons for all students and staff who have been punished as a result of the protesting. They placed Hamilton Hall, the center for student protesting since the 1960s, as their protesting spot. Students then barricaded Hamilton Hall and unrolled a banner reading “Hind’s Hall,” as students renamed it in the honor of a 6-year-old Palestinian girl who was killed by the Israeli military. Columbia administrators, after enforcing suspension threats, have involved police in order to remove students from their protesting spot on campus. There were dozens of arrests, many of the detained students being bound by zip ties as they were loaded into buses. Participants of the Hamilton Hall protests have been arrested under the crime of vandalism and trespassing. Columbia ad-

ministration stated that participants are also likely to face academic expulsion.

The counter protesters, mainly Jewish students, want to end the protests and specifically the antisemitism that has sparked because of the protests. They describe how they feel targeted and unsafe in their schools because of the protests.

In UCLA, fighting between the pro-palestinian and pro-israeli students broke out when counter-protesters attempted to break down the wooden planks and beat several pro-palestinian protesters. Amid the fighting, mace spray was used as well as fireworks directed into the crowds. The violence escalated to the point where many students on both sides left with many wounds. The police eventually got in between the fighting students, ending the violence.

The protests have also reached the University of Southern California (USC). The unfolding arguments began when valedictorian Asna Tabassum’s speech was canceled after allegations of liking and sharing anti-Israeli posts on her Instagram page were made. Following these protests by the students, USC decided to cancel the main commencement ceremony late April. The school instead announced a replacement ‘Trojan Family Graduate Celebration’ that took place in the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum and was given several safety measures to ensure no disruptions take place. Tensions at the university are high, which have made Jewish and Muslim students fear their safety as the end of the school year draws near.

## TikTok ban sparks controversy

By **Kasey Lee** and **Kaley Samiian**

With concerns of national security, President Joe Biden passed the bill potentially banning TikTok, an application frequently used and enjoyed mainly by young citizens, leading to distraughtness among United States (U.S.) citizens, April 23.

“I think Tiktok has a lot of influence on high school students,” sophomore So-

phie Levy-Wright said. “Teenagers get bored often and they just want to go on TikTok and watch it.”

With large numbers of the U.S. population using TikTok, the government has raised concerns with the app. The U.S government has given the Chinese owned company, ByteDance, one year to sell the app to an approved buyer, before it will become banned.

“People say that the U.S. government is banning it

because of China,” sophomore Ben Le said. “The U.S. senators know the company has access to all this information, so why did Tiktok ever exist in the first place? Banning it just punishes everyone. Every other social media platform already exposes the same information.”

The U.S. government is worried that the Chinese government could access sensitive user information through the app. TikTok is

the only globally-used social media that is owned by China, sparking the concerns of authorities. The government is also concerned about false information that influences its users.

“I think people will be upset by the ban,” sophomore Monte Ter-aleksanyan said. “However, eventually they’ll use Instagram Reels or Youtube.”

A lot of people are concerned with the ban, as it would end all downloads of

the app along with all of the content. Some people think that the ban will be beneficial, while others are upset by it. As of now, it’s unknown whether TikTok will be banned.

“Tiktok influences everyday life and also people’s choices,” Le said. “People choose to let TikTok influence their life, so I don’t know why Tiktok’s being banned because everyone has a choice to let it do that or let it not do that.”

## Recycling programs improve California schools

By **Estephanie Lopez**

The recycling systems in schools are improving and showing promising results in California schools.

Although schools and universities in California generate about 562,422 tons of waste each year most of the school waste consists of organic materials such as paper, cardboard and uneaten cafeteria food. In the same way, much of the waste generated in the California education system is recyclable.

There are many laws affecting schools and local education agencies to ensure

that recycling in schools remains just as much a part of it as their students.

The Mandatory Organics Recycling (MORE) requires regulated organizations to have an organic waste recycling program to separate food waste, green waste, landscape and pruning waste, non-hazardous wood waste and food-soiled paper waste that is mixed in with food waste. The California Education Code encourages each school district to maintain a recycling program in all areas of the school district by recycling paper, purchasing the paper

with the highest percentage of post-consumer waste and choosing the better option which is recyclable paper. Countless strategies for each department within a school district are also listed and recommended such as district administration, facilities and planning, child nutrition and purchasing and technology services. As a plus there are also grant and funding opportunities, for instance the Clean School Bus Replacement Program which offers several financial incentives to increase the amount of clean school buses and pushes for the de-

velopment of cleaner technologies.

There are also waste reduction grants for schools such as “Stop-Waste” offering many grant opportunities annually to nonprofits and businesses which aims to increase individual, business and community involvement and interaction on the cutback of waste in Alameda County. Waste prevention ideas are also heavily motivated and the list is extensive. Ideas such as allowing students to submit homework on the backside of used paper, using reusable dishware for class

parties and setting up waste displays to educate students and faculty.

Contentedly, there are also award and recognition programs that recognize outstanding programs and governance practices of school boards. They honor, support and encourage those educators that incorporate environmental education in their classrooms and in their teaching methods and practices; that they recognize its importance for the entire world.

# Back to Black: A controversial take on the new Amy Winehouse movie

By **Sophie Apolaya-Diaz** and **Jenna Espinoza**

The new biopic “Back to Black,” released May 17, tells the story of Amy Winehouse and the struggles she went through to create one of the most incredible albums at the time.

Directed by Sam Taylor-Johnson, the film depicts the late singer’s life before, during and after her rise to fame. The movie begins in Camden, London, where Winehouse, played by Marisa Abela, signs a contract with Island Records to release her first album, Frank.

Winehouse soon meets Black Fielder-Civil, who is played by Jack O’Connell, eventually falling madly in

love with one another. Both Winehouse and Fielder-Civil are addicted to several substances, making the relationship between the two incredibly toxic.

After a messy fight between the two, Winehouse released her groundbreaking album “Back to Black,” in October of 2006. The album was written based on her relationship with Fielder-Civil with songs like “Rehab” and “Me & Mr Jones.”

Taking the album as a message from Winehouse, the two end up reuniting and eventually getting married on a beach in Miami in 2007. However, not long after they end up divorced, which deepened Winehouse’s addiction.

Later on, Winehouse takes

several trips to rehab, now being clean of drugs and trying to fight her alcohol addiction. In the process of dealing with her mental health and addiction issues, she also wins five Grammy Awards.

In 2011, after settling into her new home in Camden Square, paparazzi swarmed the singer’s gate with the news that Fielder-Civil is in a new relationship and even expecting a baby. The ending of the film shows a crying Winehouse in the final moments of her life, singing “Tears Dry on Their Own.”

The movie has many incredible actors starring in the movie, including Leslie Manville and Eddie Marsan. However, some fans have been upset by the casting of Abela as Wine-

house in the movie and prefer to have celebrities like Lady Gaga play the role.

This one hour and 47 minute movie hasn’t gotten the best reviews from watchers who have viewed the movie and fans of Winehouse. Some people have been upset that the movie focuses more on her toxic relationship rather than the fantastic music Winehouse made in her life.

Though the movie may not have depicted Winehouse’s life as it should have, Abela plays her role in a deeply personal and dedicated way that is shown throughout the entirety of the movie.

Fans of Winehouse still have hope that one day, she will get the movie and recognition she deserves.

# Twenty One Pilots release long awaited album “Clancy”

By **Isabel Rose**

Music duo, Twenty One Pilots, have released their latest album, “Clancy,” May 24, 2024.

The band, whose genre includes a wide range of descriptions such as alternative rock, rap, hip hop and indie, released the album nearly three years following their last album, “Scaled and Icy,” which was released in 2021.

They have a total of seven studio albums, one compilation album, 10 extended plays (EP), 28 singles and 40 music videos created over the span of about 15 years.

The latest installment, “Clancy,” was released through the record label Fueled by Ramen, with a total of 13 new songs and music videos, including the singles released over the past few months, “Overcompensate,” released Feb. 29, “Next Semester,” released Mar. 27 and “Backslide,” released Apr. 25.

Aside from the pre-released songs, the album’s songs are “Midwest Indigo,” “At the risk of feeling dumb,” “The Craving, Paladin Strait,” “Routines in the Night,” “Oldies Station,” “Vignette,” “lavish,” “Navigating” and “Snap Back.”

Many fans describe the songs as a mixture of previous albums including “Trench,” released 2018 and “Blurryface,” released 2015.

The two members of the group, Tyler Joseph and Josh Dun, created a storyline intertwined within the music to create a series of events all tying together throughout the Twenty One Pilots albums. The story encompasses the thoughts and struggles of Joseph as well as his character, Clancy, in a dystopian world that parallels Joseph’s mind. In summary, Clancy is a citizen of Dema, a concrete city located in the continent Trench, who is constantly trying to es-



Artwork by Isabel Rose

cape to the Banditos, a rebel group. Clancy’s mission is to overthrow the oppressive control of the nine Bishops, who represent the thoughts keeping the minds of people destructive and depressive.

The complex world that Joseph and Dun have created has been spread throughout four albums, with Clancy being the final installment.

Though “Clancy” possesses a detailed and thrilling story for its fans, its music can also be enjoyed without knowledge of the tale with its elements of

emotion, creativity, and ability to convey difficult topics.

While the new album concludes this story, it does not mark the end of their music career, with Twenty One Pilots stating in an interview that they will continue to make music.

Prior to the official release of the album, tickets for their World Tour were announced and are available now. The band will be touring 2024 to May of 2025 worldwide in countries such as Italy, France, Spain and the United States.

# Melanie Martinez kicks off the commemorative Trilogy Tour

By **Sylah Hill**

Alternative pop singer-songwriter Melanie Martinez began her Trilogy Tour May 11, in Seattle, WA, exciting fans worldwide.

Martinez first announced the tour Nov. 9, 2023 on their social media platforms and tickets quickly became available for purchase. Just as quickly as they went on sale, the tickets were almost completely sold out in a majority of the venues. Fans were most excited to attend the tour because of a previous announcement she had made at her last concert before the release of her third

studio album, “PORTALS,” when she said that she would no longer be performing songs from her first two studio albums “Cry Baby” and “K-12.”

In addition to being a singer-songwriter, Martinez is known for their creativity in storytelling. When she released her first album “Cry Baby” in August of 2015, she created the character Cry Baby and told the dramatic and melancholy story of Crybaby’s childhood.

They followed this with the release of their self-directed movie “K-12” in September of 2019 where they portray the main character Crybaby and

her experiences from kindergarten through twelfth grade with her best friend Angelita and the duo’s experiences with supernatural abilities in boarding school.

In March of 2023, Martinez released her most recent studio album “PORTALS” where her beloved character Crybaby was reborn into a new faerie form. To solidify the transition to this new form and new setting, Martinez also replaced the thumbnails on all of their YouTube posts, removed all previous social media posts and performed the entirety of the “PORTALS” tour in the faerie prosthetic costume. Mar-

tinez additionally stated that “PORTALS” will be the end of Crybaby’s journey.

As one last commemorative journey through her eras of rebirth, Martinez created the Trilogy Tour where she would perform songs from all of her eras, excluding her singles and extended play (EP). The tour is set to continue until October 19 and additional dates have been added for Europe. Martinez will continue to demonstrate their artistic abilities and grow as an artist and a writer, only now it will be without Crybaby as the front image of their career.

# THE ROYAL COURIER SPRING 2024

The Royal Courier is El Camino Real Charter High School’s student-run and student-led newspaper publication. The Royal Courier has been publishing news for the school community since 1970.

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The Royal Courier is published by the newspaper class of El Camino Real Charter High School and is funded by the school and by advertising. All issues are free.

Our main purpose is to (1) inform the students, faculty and community of school-related news; (2) broaden the range of thinking of staff members and readers; (3) provide a forum for readers; (4) train the students in the functions of the press in a democratic society; and (5) provide entertaining features of interest to the students. All editorials without a byline reflect at least two-thirds opinion of The Royal Courier staff but are not necessarily the opinion of the administration.

Letters to the Editor are welcomed and must be signed; however, names will be withheld for valid reasons. All contributions are subject for restrictions of libel, defamation, slander and obscenity. The Royal Courier staff reserves the right to edit letters without changing the meaning, and also reserves the right to reject letters for reasons of limited space, untimely material, or unbalanced coverage.

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# “Room Under The Stairs”: a new album by Zayn Malik

By Jenna Espionza

After a long writing process of six years, singer-songwriter Zayn Malik has finally released his fourth studio album, “Room Under The Stairs,” May 17, entrancing listeners with his captivating and angelic voice.

The 15 song tracklist shows Malik’s journey to self discovery as he undergoes both love and loss. With many beautiful arching melodies, the album gives fans a sense into who Malik has truly become since his 2010 debut in the boy band, One Direction.

The album opens with the song “Dreamin,” setting the tone of the album with a melancholic but hopeful feel. The entirety of the songs are backed by an acoustic guitar, giving the album a country-like vibe and allowing Malik’s heav-

enly voice to be the main focus.

Prior to the album, “What I Am” was released March 14 as the lead single and second track on “Room Under The Stairs.” The song has an immense amount of vulnerability poured into it with lyrics like “Take me as I am/I’m tired of dancin’ around the point,” leaving fans wondering who the song could possibly be about.

The fourth track of the album, “Alienated,” was released as a single, April 12, soon becoming a fan favorite for several people. The song focuses on the feeling of being isolated and he refers to his past relationship with model Gigi Hadid. He sings lyrics like “Say goodbye to the past/Leave it all with a laugh,” encouraging his fans to leave the past behind and focus on the future.

The name of the album

comes from the fact that most of the songs were recorded in a small shoe cabinet at his house in rural Pennsylvania, where the album was also written entirely by Malik himself. The singer had felt that it was a fitting name to give to show more sentiment and allow people to get a better idea of what the album is about.

The album was co-produced by Grammy-winning producer Dave Cobb, who is well known for working with other artists like Chris Stapelton and Lady Gaga. “What got me about Zayn was his voice, you can hear love, loss, pain, triumph and humanity in it. I feel as if this record is removing the glass from his spirit directly to his fans,” Cobb said in an interview with Rolling Stone.

Malik has said in recent interviews that inspiration for the album has come from

artists such as Stapelton and Willie Nelson, also contributing to the change in genre Malik’s music has undergone.

“Room Under The Stairs,” has been one of Malik’s most personal and raw works, different from the usual R&B kind of music he usually produces in his three previous albums. The album has a strikingly mature, country type of sound, however, in a recent interview with Zach Sang, Malik said, “I haven’t got a name for the genre, It’s just me.”

Along with the release of the album, Malik debuted his music video for the seventh track, “Stardust.” The video was directed by Frank and Ivanna Borin, capturing Malik as a creature exploring the earth in an ethereal way.

Malik performed a one night concert at the O2 Shepherds Bush Empire

in London on the album’s day of release. He sang a six song set list with songs from the album. The venue had only a 2000 space capacity, making the performance incredibly intimate between Malik and his fans.

Malik’s last live concert was about nine years ago, when he was in One Direction. Because of his severe anxiety, a blockage was put between him and the stage for many years, making a number of fans incredibly proud of him for performing for his new album.

“Room Under The Stairs” has so far gotten several amazing reviews from fans, as it shows the vulnerability and honesty that was put into the album from Malik, also allowing some listeners to heavily relate to the singer.

# Bringing imagination back to life with the heartfelt new movie: “IF”



Photo by TV Insiders

By Sydney Keane and Kyleigh Zvara

The “IF” Movie came out May 16 in theaters and goes into the life of imaginary

friends who have been forgotten by their creators.

The movie follows Bea, played by Cailey Fleming, who has and continues to experience great loss in

her life. Her mother passed away when she was just six years-old and her father is currently undergoing heart surgery. During this time, she stays in her grandmother’s apartment that she hasn’t been to since her mother died.

While there, Bea sees strange characters that she discovers to be Imaginary Friends [IFs]. She begins trying to help IFs who have been left behind after their owners have forgotten about them. However, for Bea, it becomes an emotional rollercoaster. Even though Bea

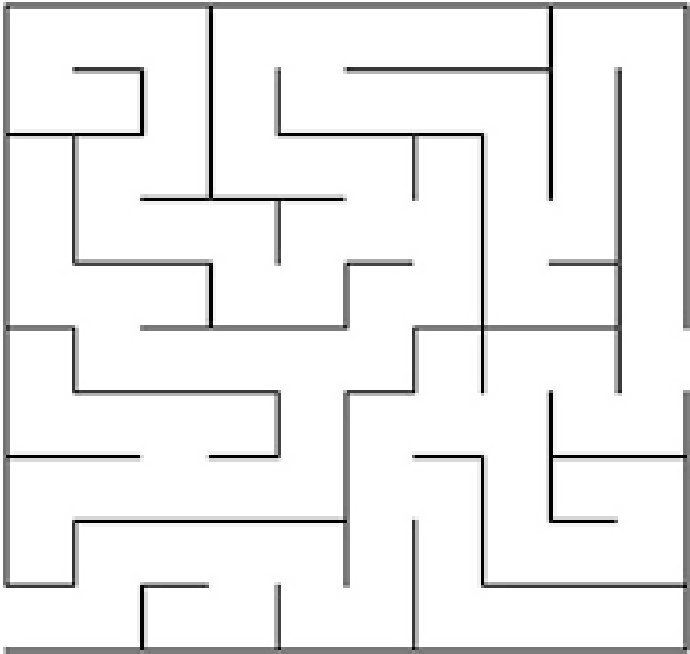
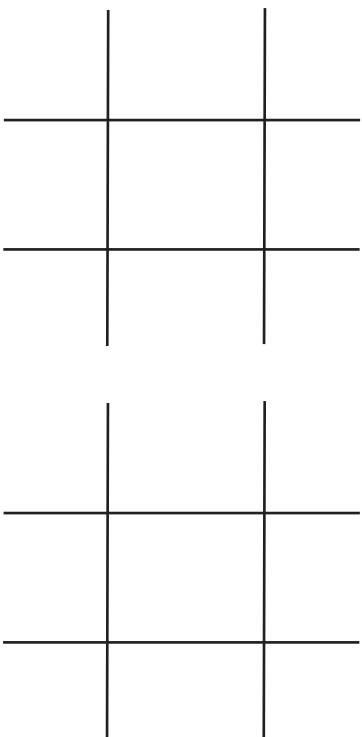
is the one helping them, they help her in their own way since IFs are meant to be a friend to count on for children.

John Krasinski, most known for his work in “The Office,” is the writer, director and voice of Bea’s dad. The movie includes other famous actors such as Ryan Reynolds who plays Cal, Bea’s neighbor who can see the imaginative figures known as IFs. “IF” also features many other famous voices including Matt Damon, Steve Carell, Emily Blunt and Awkwafina.

The movie has gotten mixed reviews with a rating of four stars on Common Sense Review, a 48% on Rotten Tomatoes and around a seven out of 10 on Internet Movie Database [IMDb]. Some people thought the movie was heartfelt and cute, while others thought that it was too deep for young children despite it being marketed towards them.

Overall, the cast is very memorable, but not exactly what movie-goers thought the movie was about.

# The Royal Games



Find as many summer themed words as you can!

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

# Royals graduate high school with bright futures ahead

By Kasey Lee and Kyleigh Zvara

As college begins to near for seniors, four of the school’s students received prestigious academic scholarships, helping them pursue their dreams in their college careers.

“I’m looking forward to expanding my connections within the scholarship and the university itself,” senior Seth Valdez said. “I plan to explore everything and really just find who I am.”

Valdez earned the merit-based leadership Posse Foundation Scholarship and is committed to Santa Clara University with a full ride. After going through the three step interview process, Valdez was one of the 829 students out of more than 17,000 to win the grant. Similarly, the other students who received scholarships are also looking forward to their college experiences.

“[I’m excited about] moving to Boston [and] making new friends,” senior Andraye Terell Salazar said. “When I visited The Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), I just really clicked with all the people I

met there.”

Two students received full-ride scholarships through the QuestBridge Program, including Salazar who is committed to MIT and Gerardo Gomez who is committed to the University of Virginia (UVA). The QuestBridge scholarship was developed for high-achieving students from low-income families and is highly competitive.

“I like the way that QuestBridge increases the awareness of low income students,” Salazar said. “It helps them get the idea that top colleges like MIT or Stanford can be affordable for students who wouldn’t necessarily think that because of their backgrounds.”

With support from people around them including their families, friends, partners, counselors and teachers, these students have successfully earned their scholarships.

“I’d want to thank my wonderful teacher, Ms. Montague,” senior Sriya Datla said. “She really helped me from the beginning. She’s been my number one supporter.”

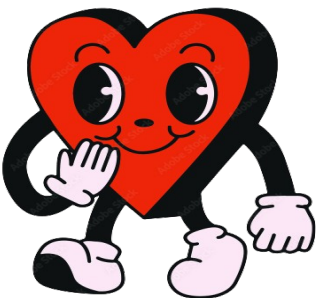
Datla was awarded the Coca-Cola Scholarship after a re-

warding, but long, process of essays, applications and interviews. She and 149 other students in the nation earned the scholarship out of the 103,800 people who applied. Like the other awardees, Dalta is also looking forward to pursuing her bright future, as she is attending Brown University and their medical school.

“[Being awarded the scholarship was] just really happy and genuine,” Datla said. “I’m really looking forward to taking advantage of their open curriculum, finding myself, meeting new students, making new friends and traveling across the country.”

All four students are excited to begin their new college careers and to explore the opportunities that their scholarships have opened for them.

“The community at UVA is the best I’ve ever seen,” Gomez said. “It brings about something in me and I’m [excited for] the new changes.”



## Bye Bye Bindy Beane! WE LOVE YOU!

By Editors

As the 2023-2024 school year comes to an end, journalism is sad to lose senior Editor in Chief Sydney Keane (Cindy) as she graduates, but happy to let her move on to future success.

“Through journalism trips, newspaper writing, and bonding inside and out of class, Sydney has truly shown me what a hardworking and dedicated person looks like,” sophomore editor Victoria Matz said.

Cindy is committed to University of Oregon as a journalism major and is going to continue to thrive in the future as a talented journalist.

“Sydney is the most wonderful, dedicated person I know,” sophomore editor Isabel Rose said. “Her passion for journalism is very inspiring and I’m so glad I got the chance to know her.”

Her dedication and enthusiasm in journalism has inspired all who surround her. Over the past few years with her, journalism has formed a close and lifelong relationship with her.

“Spending time with Sydney over the past two years has been the best,” sophomore editor Kasey Lee said. “I’ve made so many memories with her and I’m going to miss see-

ing her everyday.”

Through numerous competitions whether local or national, journalism has loved spending time with Cindy and are extremely sad to see her go.

“Sydney is so talented and I’m so proud of where she’s going,” sophomore editor Kyleigh Zvara said. “The class won’t be the same without her and we’re all gonna miss her very much.”

Journalism is already so proud of what she’s accomplished so far and can’t wait to see all she will achieve in the future. They are excited to watch her grow even more into the amazing person they know she will become.

“Cindy is one of the sweetest and funniest people I know,” sophomore editor Kaley Samian said. “I’m so grateful that we met in Journalism, and that I had the opportunity to learn from her. She has been a role-model for me, and she has genuinely been one of the best editor-in-chiefs.”

Besides just the exciting and lasting memories they made with Cindy, journalism has learned so much from her. Not only has Cindy taught them how to be better writers, but also how to be better people in life.

“We are all gonna miss Sydney so much next year, but I’m

so proud of all the hard work she’s put into the paper and school,” junior editor-in-chief Jenna Espinoza said. “I just know she’s gonna go on to do amazing things in her life.”

Cindy has been a role model for all members in journalism with her hard work and dedication. She’s been an amazing editor in chief by ensuring the newspaper is produced smoothly while always encouraging others to use their own creativity.

“Sydney is a true leader,” English teacher and journalism advisor Amy Carter said. “She cares about the writers she works with and gives them the space and guidance they need to develop and grow. We will all miss her so much!”

As Cindy graduates, journalism will forever appreciate the time spent with her and look forward to what her future holds.

“We’re going to miss Cindy so much, but we know she’ll do amazing no matter where life takes her,” Editors from journalism said. “We hope she knows we will always be there for her and hope she will visit us in the next years to come.”

# CLUB COLUMN

By Sophie Apolaya Diaz and Kasey Lee

## Model United Nations - Wednesdays at Lunch in C-120



Model United Nations (MUN) creates an opportunity for students to participate in college conferences to represent countries and find solutions to global issues.

“I participated in MUN in middle school and I’ve always had a passion for international affairs,” junior club president Lia Khoshkish said. “If anyone is looking to build their public speaking skills and learn about global issues [too] then they should join.”

MUN is a great chance for students at school to take part in an extracurricular activity that can benefit them in the future.



## Indian Club - Thursdays at Lunch in B-118

Indian club is a place for students to learn about India and its different food, people, traditions and places.

“We always give foods like candy, samosas and special chips like lays made from India,” club president sophomore Rehan Mathew said. “It’s also a fun place where one can hang out with their friends.”

The club is a welcoming place for students of all heritage to come together and enjoy sharing Indian culture.

## K-pop Dance Club - Tuesdays and Wednesdays at Lunch in the Small Gym



K-Pop Dance Club teaches members the choreography to various K-pop songs and frequently performs for school events.

“We have a lot of practice but we have fun,” club president junior Sophie Motaril said. “We perform on stage many times throughout the year [and] make lasting memories.”

This club is a perfect way to hone your dancing skills while also meeting people with similar music taste and interests.



## Pre-Law Club - Tuesdays at Lunch in S-3

Pre-Law Club is a place for curious students to discuss topics along the lines of public speaking, types of law and court cases with others. “I love law and feel like there isn’t really anything law-based at El Camino so I decided to create this club. I want to start a mock trial team next year so I thought this would be a great introduction,” club president sophomore Kayla Khorsandi said. “This club will help shape successful law students while giving them a safe environment to discuss their interests!”

Anyone who is interested in the field of law is encouraged to join the club, and it is a great opportunity to learn more about the topic.

# ACADECA breaks record during Nationals

By Victoria Matz and Isabel Rose

The school’s Academic Decathlon (ACADECA) team brought home their 10th national title, April 27, with nine students total, who worked diligently throughout the year to prepare for their competition in Pittsburgh, Pa.

“We try to do things as a team. [We] hit one subject hard, try to test what we don’t and do know, and then move on, rinse and repeat,” junior Darren Du said. “[At first it was] just a lot of reading[and] a lot of mutual testing. Gradually it became fun even though it wasn’t in the first place.”

The immense support of the group was an essential part of their success. Without the strength of the team, the journey and process wouldn’t have been as fulfilling.

“The only person that can

harm you during this entire process is yourself if you don’t seek out that help [from the team],” senior Jaydon Escobedo said. “Everyone is there to help you throughout the entire [process], even after.”

Through their hard work and determination, they achieved many outstanding placements such as winners of the Team Super Quiz, Division 1 National Champions and of course overall National Champions.

In addition to these team accomplishments, there were many individual ones with Darren Du winning seven medals, Jacob Faye winning eight, Willa Porter winning six, Lincoln Webster winning eight, Ambika Chikara winning seven, Eva Konstantini winning two, Adra Ellis winning nine, Niki Safaie winning three and Jayden Escobedo winning two.

“The journey with [the

team] was amazing, but winning with all of them was even better,” senior Eva Konstantini said. “[We’ve] spent countless hours, days, months, weeks studying for one moment and second place just wouldn’t have cut it.”

An astonishing and well-deserved win was received by the ACADECA team and left all the team members extremely shocked.

“We all honestly couldn’t believe we were hearing our name on that speaker,” Konstantini

said. “We all got up and we were looking at each other like we were confused. The tears didn’t even start coming out of my eyes until days later when I finally processed that we are National Champions in [the] Academic Decathlon.”

Though they achieved an incredible feat and broke a record for number of nation-

als won, they all remarked how the most rewarding part was the experience and friends they made along the way.

“I love my teammates just how we’ve grown closer over the years,” Escobedo said. “[We’ve] turned from strangers to friends and now we’re basically family.”

From friends, to teammates to family, their bond helped strengthen their ability to reach their achievements. Their reasons for joining the program varied, with many wanting to improve themselves or prove that they were capable enough.

“[I joined because] I knew that I wanted to restore a lot of my academic confidence,” senior Ambika Chikkara said. “I took a bunch of hard classes in high school and some of the times I would feel bad about myself, like I wasn’t doing

good enough in this class.” Being a part of the program caused them to learn about new and diverse subjects that revealed a new passion.

“It’s great to learn about the wide variety of subjects I wouldn’t have known about without ACADECA,” Du said. “It’s just great to dip my toes into all the interesting subjects that I find are a bit rewarding.”

Though most of the members will be graduating this year, the experiences and connections they created this last year will last forever.

“From the beginning, I knew that my team was something special,” Chikara said. “Each and every single one of my team members just work so hard and I’m just so glad that I got to be part of a once in a lifetime experience with them.”

# May Program Highlight: Broadcast Journalism

By Jenna Espinoza

The new Broadcast Journalism program being added to the 2024-2025 school year has students excited to produce weekly video news programs for students and staff.

“Broadcast Journalism is a news type report system where we’re going to broadcast videos to the school about different events and different things going around at our school,” sophomore Taye Sangkhae said.

The program plans to produce broadcasted events for

students to get a better look on important news and occasions revolving around the school.

“The class also isn’t just about news events, it also helps highlight the staff who are very underappreciated,” sophomore Angelina Cruz said. “It allows students to get more depth into what goes on behind the scenes.”

The program helps students enhance their journalistic skills, whether it be writing, public speaking, or even editing.

“I have a passion for video editing and video pro-

ducing,” Sangkhae said. “I wanted to join Broadcast Journalism just to use those skills and to impact the school with it.”

Broadcast Journalism helps students learn the basics of journalism while also getting a look at what being a newscaster is like.

“Broadcast helps to spread the word about news quicker than how a newspaper would,” Cruz said. “The videos are gonna be broadcasted and it can be live as well.”

Several students who have joined the program are ex-

tremely excited for the new year to begin so they can begin working on news broadcasts that will help impact the school in many ways.

“It’s gonna be very educational because [students in the class are] gonna learn about editing and interviewing,” Cruz said. “They’re also [going to] learn the art of broadcasting and everything about it.”

If students hope to one day have a career in Broadcast Journalism, they should consider switching into the class for the upcoming school year.

“The people that are just thinking about joining should at least try to apply because the class is gonna be new next year. There’s a lot of things that we’re going to be able to experiment with when creating news broadcasts for the school,” Sangkhae said. “It definitely is going to be a fun learning experience for everyone in the class.”



**WHERE IS THE CLASS OF '24 OFF TO?**

UC LOS ANGELES

UC DAVIS

Loyola Marymount

UC San Diego

CSU Long Beach

Moorpark

CSU Fresno

University of Oregon

Reed

Community College

U of Miami

Cruz

WORCESTER

College

John Cabot

UC Irvine

CU Boulder

Los Angeles

POLYTECHNIC

University

University Leipzig

Mission College

INSTITUTE

Army West Point

U of Southern

UC Riverside

SANTA BARBARA

SAN DIEGO STATE

California

UC Merced

CITY COLLEGE

Sonoma State

Brown University

U OF ARIZONA

CSU Northridge

University Massachusetts

Marymount

CSU Fullerton

UC Berkeley

UC Santa

Institute of

Manhattan College

Carnegie Mellon

Barbara

CSU Dominguez Hills

University

Pierce College



Thank you,

teachers, for your

work and

dedication to

educate students.

# Students relieved by confirmed graduation location

By **Kasey Lee** and **Jessica Khandouzi**

The school’s football field is on its final steps of completion and will be completed in time for the graduation ceremony, filling many seniors with relief.

“[The completion of the field] will be a huge relief for me,” Executive Director David Hussey said. “More importantly [it will be] a positive place for students that use it day-in and day-out.

The Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD)

has officially completed its construction of the field and AstroTurf is planned to finish laying padding and turf in the next few weeks, before the end of the year. Many seniors were concerned that the field wouldn’t be finished on time and their graduation ceremony would be relocated, however with the latest update they are now relieved.

“[If the graduation ceremony was being moved] it would be really inconvenient,” senior Benjamin Roodbari said. “I feel like it’s much better at [the

school] instead of somewhere else.”

After months of construction the field is finally going to be open to students, just in time for graduation, giving seniors the opportunity to have a proper ceremony and goodbye from the school.

“I feel like it [would’ve been] sad if we weren’t doing [the graduation ceremony] at the school that we were taught in, for the past four years,” senior Tara Chngidakyan said. “It [would have been] disheartening since we also missed

out on our freshman year due to COVID-19.”

Over the past few months, the field has been under construction relocating many school events that seniors were excited to attend, disappointing many seniors who wanted to have a fulfilled senior year.

“It sucks because we didn’t have the field at all for the whole year even for football games or any of our senior events,” senior Cassidy Ford said. “[For me personally], I would have been on track, but because we didn’t have a place to

practice I just stopped doing the sport altogether.”

In the past few years, the football field’s condition has taken a toll on many students, limiting different sports teams’ abilities to practice and opportunities for all students to enjoy events. Now that the field is complete, students can now enjoy these various events again in the upcoming years.

“I believe [the completed field] will help create school energy and a sense of school pride,” Hussey said.

# AP psychology and the ethics of social experiments

By **Sophie Apolaya Diaz** and **Estephania Lopez**

AP Psychology students at El Camino are evaluating how ‘worth it’ it is to take the class and the ethics behind it. Most students expressed enjoyment in taking the course because of the fascinating knowledge they acquired, gaining a much better understanding of the human way of life.

“I like AP Psychology because it is so intriguing to learn and realize how peo-

ple work,” junior Sarah-Maria Tanios said. “Having so much knowledge gives me the ‘Aha!’ moment and I apply what I learn to people’s behaviors.”

One of the most engaging things about AP psychology is that students often relate to social experiments learned about in class. They tend to simultaneously gain a greater understanding of themselves and others through the material.

“My favorite experiment is [Solomon] Asch’s con-

formity. [Asch was] trying to see if one person conforms to the rest of the group and even though they know the answers wrong, they choose it so they can fit in,” sophomore Kylar Niitsuma explained. “I tend to find myself just picking what the rest of people pick. Whether that be answering a question with everyone or what everyone agrees with.”

The majority of students said they would be willing to participate in these social experiments while others

believed it would cause bias because of their knowledge of psychology already.

“If I acted in a way I didn’t like in an experiment I’d overthink my own behaviors, so I wouldn’t do any social experiments,” sophomore Taye Sangkhae said.

The debate over the ethics regarding these social experiments has been a hot topic for ages.

“I do think they are ethical at this point in time,” junior Sofia Khachaturova said. “Following American

Psychological Association (APA) guidelines assures that. In the past, however, they were very much not because consent was not required, and animals were abused.” Psychology goes deep, it goes far beyond the surface of the human mind and human behaviors. It is something that we all can share and relate to one way. “It is the fact that people act the way they are expected to that is so crazy,” Khachaturova said. “I guess we’re all just crazy alike!”

# Summer School: To help or to hinder?

By **Kaley Samiian** and **Kyleigh Zvara**

As the school year comes to an end and summer begins, many students have decided to continue their education over the break via summer school.

“Summer school helps you get ahead or take necessary classes that you need to take, but don’t have room in your schedule,” junior Caitlin McMillan said.

For many, classes over the break allow for students to advance in the curriculum, putting them a step ahead of others when the next school

year starts. Getting classes out of the way for credits is also a huge reason that students want to take summer school. Students would rather have classes they enjoy during the year than ones they only need for A-G credits.

“I think [summer courses] are good because you can either recuperate your credits or you can add on credits so you can open up your schedule for a new class the next year,” sophomore Aiden Lopez said.

Summer school also grants kids the opportunity to catch up on classes they

didn’t do well in before. Many note that it is better for them to take a failed class over summer rather than in the new year because completely retaking that class forces them to remove a course from their schedule.

“I do it to get ahead, but it takes up time out of your summer and you have to do all this work really quickly,” sophomore Gianna Buondelmonte said. “So, you’re really pressured and stressed out in the summer when you should be having fun.”

Summer is the one long

vacation given every year, and is meant to be a time of decompression and fun. Even though summer school can help take off pressure from the school year, it can overtake this much-needed break.

“I feel like taking a language over summer can be really difficult... and if they move on to a higher level of language in their year, they’re like, I learned nothing over the summer. So they’re going to do badly,” Buondelmonte said.

There are some classes that people feel should not be taken over summer.

Courses that need in person learning like languages or more advanced subjects that require a teacher to guide students and should ideally be taken in person over the time that a school year provides.

“Certain subjects maybe [shouldn’t be taken], but other people have different abilities so they can excel in other subjects better during summer or during regular school year,” Lopez said.

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## Boys JV baseball swings for first place



Photo by Rebecca Margolin

By **Oliver Yuval** and **Kyleigh Zvara**

The school’s junior varsity (JV) baseball team has been crowned the JV West Valley League Champions after a successful season with nine game wins since it started in early March.

“The season has gone well,” freshman first baseman Macai Friedman said. “We had a rough start at the first game then picked things back up in league and [we’re] having a really good league.”

With the new year, there were many new freshmen introduced to the JV baseball team. The teammates created special friendships and impactful bonds.

“I think we bonded pretty well because a lot of the people didn’t know each other before [this season] since we’re all in different grades,” freshman pitcher, shortstop and first baseman Cameron Rosenberg said. “I think [the freshmen have] been included really well.”

The inclusivity of freshmen on the baseball team and the time the team spent

together off the field led to stronger connections between all the players..

“I feel like we’ve bonded extremely well,” freshman pitcher and third baseman Jackson Sellz said. “After Friday games, if we win that game, we all go to one guy’s house and swim for a while. We hang out outside of school a lot, so we’ve bonded extremely well.”

The team chemistry that was built this season led to many successes in their performances in the West Valley League. Such success included a 14-1 win against Cleveland High School and a 1-9 win versus Taft Charter High School.

“My favorite game was probably our first game at home,” freshman third baseman and pitcher Dylan Morquecho said. “We played Birmingham [High School], we beat them 7-0, that was a fun game.”

After their win against Birmingham High School, they went on a hot streak where they won seven of their next nine games, finishing first in the West Valley League.

“We’re first in the West Valley League for JV,” freshman catcher Ryan De La Rosa said. “We played like a team, we had fun, and we got many wins.”

The players were motivated to keep their win streak alive due to their love of the game and the comradery they have with their teammates.

“[What motivates me is my] passion for the game, it’s really fun to make friends and have that family bond,” sophomore middle infielder Michael Spancer said.

With their final win, the JV team is ready to continue their good play into next season, playing the sport they love with the people who have become their family.

“The thing that motivates me is the fun I have when playing,” De La Rosa said. “You know, family is also a big thing because I played baseball my whole life. My parents have invested a lot of time into me, and I want to make them proud.”

## An unpredictable NBA post-season

By **Kaley Samiian** and **Oliver Yuval**

The National Basketball Association’s (NBA) yearly playoffs tipped-off April 20 in Cleveland to start of the post-season featuring star players and the best teams of the regular season.

The East had many entertaining series. The Cleveland Cavaliers played the Orlando Magic in the first round of the NBA playoffs where they won in seven games with star performances from Donovan Mitchell with high-scoring games, arguably winning them the series. Additionally, the Boston Celtics and Miami Heat rematched in a series

that has become a rivalry in recent years, and the Celtics beat an undermanned Heat team in five games. Another Eastern series showcased the New York Knicks beating the Philadelphia 76ers in six games with Jalen Brunson leading them to victory despite injuries.

In the West, the Denver Nuggets and the Los Angeles Lakers faced off in a rematch of last year’s conference finals. The Nuggets won in 5 closely contested games where Nikola Jokic and Jamal Murray showed highest consistency. The Lakers even led for 70% of the series despite losing four out of five games. Additionally, another fan-favorite

team, the Phoenix Suns, was eliminated by the Minnesota Timberwolves 4-0. Anthony Edwards broke out as a star in this series. Another major series was the Dallas Mavericks versus Los Angeles Clippers where the Mavericks won in six games as Doncic and Kyrie Irving contributed massively.

Following round one, semifinals opened May 6 in Madison Square Garden. This began the Pacers and Knicks series which received controversy over regulation and the Knicks’ injury report. Despite this, the best performing player was point-guard (P.G.) player Tyrese Haliburton as

## Girls swim dives into a great season

By **Victoria Matz**

As the school year comes to a triumphant end, the girl’s swim team celebrates their season’s victories and successes.

“Our team has accomplished many personal records from all of us,” junior Taylor Nguyen said. “We have also been able to beat many teams with our relays and our individual events.”

Students trained all year long preparing for their tournaments during school and on the weekends. The girl’s swim members explained their preparations and how they ensure a great tournament.

“When I am preparing for meets I try [to] eat beforehand and calm my nerves,” junior Sophia Hernandez said. “I just think it over and replay it so that I know what I should expect to do without a doubt.”

The teams value their teamwork and deeply appreciate the support and efforts shown throughout their tough season.

“Our group dynamic is very fun, cheerful and encouraging,” Nguyen said. “We are always cheering each other on to go faster during our events and we are always reassuring each other of our hard work during the meet and in our overall season, which I love.”

Not only do the students work on skills and other details for the sport, but they also focus greatly on

team building and bonding with their teammates.

“We mess with each other a lot on the team and joke around,” sophomore Olive Sanders said. “We’re all good friends, and we spend time together outside of practice as a group.”

In addition, the girl’s team has achieved great feats including winning meets against Birmingham High School and Granada Hills High School’s teams. They also successfully secured third place overall in the California Interscholastic Federation (CIF) qualifiers.

“We made it to CIF, which [is] the city finals, and we were able to place top ninth for the girls,” Nguyen said.

Students thoroughly enjoy practicing and training for their sport as they find it improves their mental health and overall happiness.

“I love aquatics and pushing myself to improve athletically,” sophomore Olive Sanders said.

Nonetheless, the hard work, effort and time that the girls have put into their sport has clearly been reflected and the school is immensely proud of their accomplishments.

“It is a great experience and the people you meet really are worth it,” Hernandez said. “Practice may be a little difficult at times but it’s always doable and our coach and team definitely know how to make it a good time.”

the Pacers made the Eastern Conference Finals after winning game seven. The other Eastern series was the Cavaliers and Celtics. The Celtics were highly favored at 15.5 points and closed out the series in five games.

In the Western Conference, the Nuggets and Timberwolves played for the second year in a row. Edwards’ and Jokic’s performances were most consistent, yet the series was unpredictable with several blowouts. It reached game seven, where the Wolves made an unexpected comeback from being down 20, making the Western Conference Finals for the second time in franchise history. The

other conference semi-final in the West was between the Thunder (OKC) and Mavericks. OKC was recognized for their success as a very young team. However, star-players Luka Doncic and Kyrie Irving closed-out the series in six games, and will compete in the conference finals for the second time in three years.

The NBA playoffs will continue with the conference finals with matchups of the Timberwolves versus Mavericks and the Pacers versus Celtics. One rising superstar will win their first ring this season.