THE TORCH PREVIEW

WITH AUGUST ABBOTT

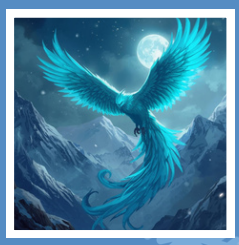
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Olympic High School

THE TORCH

Student-Led Digital Newspaper: Where Tomorrow's Leaders Speak Today



DECEMBER 19, 2025
VOLUME 08 ISSUE 04

CULTURAL CELEBRATIONS

BY ASHLEY MASSA

Christmas Traditions

Christmas is celebrated on December 25th with lights, decorations, and festive family gatherings. People exchange gifts, enjoy special meals, and take part in fun traditions. Many also attend church to honor the holiday's religious meaning.



Hanukkah Traditions

Hanukkah is a Jewish holiday that celebrates the miracle of a tiny jar of oil that kept the temple's lamp burning for eight days instead of one. It began after the Jewish people, called the Maccabees, won a battle and took back their temple from the Greeks. Jewish people celebrate by lighting the menorah for eight nights, eating foods like latkes and doughnuts, giving small gifts, and playing a game called dreidel.

Kwanzaa Traditions

Kwanzaa is an African American holiday that celebrates community, culture, and unity. It was created in 1966 by Dr. Maulana Karenga to honor African traditions and to bring people together after a difficult time in the U.S. It is celebrated for seven days, and each day has a special principle like unity or creativity. Families light a candle each night, share meals, give small gifts, and celebrate their heritage.



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August Abbott
Kayla Verduzco
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Saniya Logan
William Knight

VOLUME 8 ISSUE 4 SOURCES

Christmas in the Phillipines

By AJ Candasa

In the Philippines, as soon as September hits, the streets are covered with colorful lanterns, bright ornaments, and lights as Filipino people prepare to celebrate the holiday season. So why do Filipinos celebrate Christmas this early in September?

Christmas in the Philippines is celebrated differently than in many other countries. Instead of waiting until December, Filipinos begin celebrating 100 days before Christmas, which begins on September 16. Sociologist Bro. Clifford Sorita says that they do this to make the holidays less stressful. It allows people to plan instead of rushing at the last minute. He also says that knowing how much time is left helps people manage their time better. The long countdown motivates Filipinos to slowly finish their Christmas preparations before the big day arrives.

The celebration does not stop on December 25th, though. In fact, Christmas continues well into January and officially ends with the Feast of the Three Kings. Religion is important to Filipino Christmas traditions. One of the most important practices is Simbang Gabi, which is nine early morning or evening masses leading up to Christmas Eve. The services include Filipino elements such as star-shaped lanterns known as parol, traditional fabrics, and local flowers. The parol, which can be seen in homes and streets everywhere, represents the Star of Bethlehem and is as a symbol of hope and light.

Family gatherings are an important part of the holiday season. On Christmas Eve, families attend Midnight Mass and then come together for Noche Buena, a large meal shared at midnight. Christmas Day is usually spent visiting relatives and giving gifts. Communities also celebrate with parades, parties, and neighborhood events.

Food is an important part of the season and represents generosity, abundance, and togetherness. Meals are often prepared as a group and shared not only with family members but also with neighbors and guests.



Christmas is considered the most important holiday in the Philippines because it means more than celebration. It brings families together and celebrates strong faith. More than just a season, Christmas is a meaningful expression of Filipino identity and community.

Click the image on the left to learn more about Christmas in the Philippines.

Martin Luther King Jr. Day: A Day of Service

january

By The Torch Staff

Martin Luther King Jr. was a Baptist minister and a leader of the American Civil Rights Movement. Born on January 15, 1929, he worked tirelessly in the 1950s and 1960s to end racial segregation and promote equal rights for all people. Dr. King believed in peaceful protest and helped lead historic events such as the Montgomery Bus Boycott and the 1963 March on Washington, where he shared his vision for a more just and united nation. His efforts helped bring about landmark laws like the Civil Rights Act and the Voting Rights Act, and he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1964 for his leadership in nonviolent activism.

Each year, we celebrate Martin Luther King Jr. Day not only as a time to remember his life but as a national Day of Service.

This day encourages people across the country to volunteer, help neighbors, and make their communities stronger. Serving others in Dr. King's name is a meaningful way to continue his work toward equality, justice, and the "Beloved Community" he dreamed of building a society rooted in kindness, fairness, and mutual respect.



Whether it's volunteering with a local organization, helping someone in need, or simply showing kindness in our everyday actions, each act of service honors Dr. King's legacy and brings us closer to a community where everyone thrives.

LUNAR NEW YEAR

By Ashley Massa

Significance

Lunar New Year is celebrated because it marks the start of the lunar year, but it's also really about honoring ancestors, bringing families together, staying hopeful for luck and good fortune, and doing traditions like cleaning the house to get rid of bad energy, and in Concord CA people join the celebration with things like lion dances, crafts, and community events that help everyone experience the culture.



San Francisco Chinese New Year Festival

The San Francisco Lunar New Year Parade is celebrated because it kicks off the Lunar New Year and brings good luck and fresh starts while showing off Chinese culture with huge dragons, drums, and big floats, and it originally started in the 1800s when Chinese immigrants wanted to share their traditions and feel proud of who they were, and now the whole city crowds into Chinatown and downtown to watch the parade at night and just enjoy the energy, food, and giant performances that make it one of the biggest celebrations around.

Lunar New Year started in ancient China to mark the new lunar year and celebrate farming traditions and myths like the monster Nian. Now it's celebrated not just in China but all over the world in places like San Francisco, New York, and Singapore. It's important because it brings families together, honors ancestors, and celebrates luck, new beginnings, and prosperity.



Food For Those in Need

BY KAYLA VERDUZCO AND SANIYA

The holiday season can be a joyful time, but it can also bring added stress for families facing food insecurity. To help support our community, we'vel isted some local food resourc opportunities available nearby.

FOOD BANK of Contra Costa & Solano

Loma Vista

266 San Carlos Ave, Concord, 1st & 3rd Thursday 2:00-3:00pm. (Closed: January 1). Look for the Food Bank box truck. Families and individuals can pick up FREE fresh produce, proteins, dairy and a variety of nonperishable food once or twice a month.

St. Francis of Assisi

Open on Wednesdays from 9:30am to 11:30 am and on Saturdays from 9am to 11am!! Families and individuals can pick up to 15 pounds of FREE fresh produce twice a month. Bring bags!

Queen of All Saints

2390 Grant St, Concord, Wednesday 9:30-11:30am 3rd Saturday 10:00-11:00am. Phone: 925-609-5944 Call to confirm hours and special holiday distributions.

Salvation Army Concord

C3950 Clayton Rd, Concord, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday & Friday 10:00-11:45am & 1:00-2:45pm. Phone: 925-676-6180 Call to confirm hours and special holiday distributions.

IMAGE SOURCE: GOOGLE IMAGES

Holiday RECIPES

BY ASHLEY MASSA

CLICK ANY IMAGE TO FIND THE RECIPE

Peppermint Bark

Peppermint bark is a delicious treat with a perfect mix of chocolate and mint. It only takes about 20 minutes to make its super easy and quick and everyone will love it!





Ginger Bread

Gingerbread cookies are a classic holiday favorite with warm, spicy flavors, and they're super cute and customizable. They usually take around 30 minutes to make!

Yule Log

PA yule log cake is a rich, chocolatey holiday dessert that looks beautiful and festive, plus it's fun to decorate and customize. It usually takes about 1–2 hours to make!





Hot Chocolate Cookies

Hot chocolate cookies are a cozy, chocolatey treat that's both adorable and easy to customize with toppings like marshmallows. They usually take about 20–30 minutes to make!

IMAGE SOURCE: GOOGLE IMAGES

Filipino FLAVOR

BY THE TORCH STAFF

CLICK ANY IMAGE TO FIND THE RECIPE

Filipino Spaghetti

A beloved staple on the Christmas table, known for its sweet-style sauce made with tomato sauce, banana ketchup, and sugar, then topped with hot dogs, ground meat, and plenty of grated cheese.





Biko or Sticky Rice Cake

A classic Filipino dessert that is rich, sweet, and chewy, often topped with a golden coconut caramel, making it a comforting treat commonly served at holidays and family

Filipino Fruit Salad

A sweet and creamy holiday favorite, this dish combines fruit cocktail, cream, and condensed milk, served chilled. Like macaroni salad, it tastes even better when prepared a day in advance, making it a staple on the Christmas table.





Pancit Bihon Guisado

A classic Filipino noodle dish made with thin rice noodles stir-fried with vegetables, meat, and savory seasonings. It's commonly served at family gatherings and celebrations, symbolizing long life and good luck for those who enjoy it.

IMAGE SOURCE: GOOGLE IMAGES

Holiday Craft Ideas

By Ashley Massa



Mason Jar Snowglobe

Snow globe mason jars are a fun and cute DIY craft that you can personalize with little figures and glitter. They're super easy to make and only take about 10–15 minutes!

Paper Snowflakes

Paper snowflakes are a simple, fun craft that you can decorate and customize any way you like. They only take a few minutes to make!





Sock Snowman

Sock snowmen are an easy, adorable DIY craft that you can customize with colors and cute little accessories. They only take about 10–15 minutes to make!

FLAMES OF FLAVOR

BY ASHLEY MASSA & KIYOMI WEBB

This Terms Recipe



2 Simple Ingredients

- Candy canes
- Milk chocolate chips

Kiki and I are so excited to make peppermint bark together and share it with the staff this winter season. It feels like the perfect cozy treat to spread a little cheer. We can't wait to package them up, pass them around, and brighten everyone's day with something homemade and sweet! **Click the image below to watch!**



IMAGE SOURCE: GOOGLE IMAGES

Olympic Students Give Back!



Students from Ms. Davis's Academic Success classes recently spent time giving back to the community by volunteering at the Contra Costa Food Bank. As part of their Volunteer Unit experience, students dedicated two hours to sorting and packaging food that will be picked up and distributed to individuals and families in need.

The Contra Costa Food Bank is always welcoming new volunteers, and students are encouraged to return on their own or even volunteer with their families. For more information about how to get involved, follow the links below!

CLICK HERE!



CLICK HERE!



CLICK HERE!



CLICK HERE!



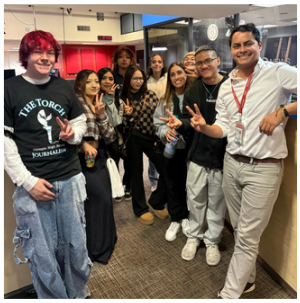
Feild trip exclusive: Inside the news room!

By: Ashley Massa

The Torch, student journalism class meets first period in Ms. Prater's room and is an elective class with the main goal of producing a digital newspaper for our peers to inform them of important topics and connect them with campus and community news. We publish *The Torch*, at the end of each term and we recently got to go to the KTVU 2 Newsroom in Oakland on a field trip. The day started early in the morning with the whole class meeting in the library for breakfast from Los Gallos, a well-known local Mexican restaurant here in Concord. We ate tacos and burritos together and talked about what we were hoping to see at the station. It was a chill way to start the day, and we all put on our new journalism T-shirts before heading out. After we ate, we prepared to head out on our walk to the BART station.



Above: Sitting at the anchor's desk before reading the teleprompter.



Above: Meeting local news reporter James Torres

Once we got to BART station, we took two trains to Oakland, and walked a short distance to Jack London Square, where the newsroom is located. On the way there, everyone was excited about finally getting to see what goes on behind the scenes of a real newsroom. When we arrived, we were welcomed by Darren Zulberti, the Assistant News Director, and Latoyia Bowman, the Administrative Assistant. They were super friendly and led us into the lobby, where we immediately noticed the Emmy Awards and other awards the station had won. It was definitely impressive. The tour started in the office area, where we saw the assignment desk and learned how reporters get their stories for the day. Then we visited the control room, which was packed with screens and people making sure everything on air runs smoothly. Seeing how much work happens behind the scenes was really eye-opening.
Next, we went into one the working newsrooms and met the host of the Zip Trips segment, Gasia Mikaelian (right). We even watched a reporter practice their lines for an upcoming broadcast. It felt surreal to watch it happen in person. The last stop was upstairs in a bigger newsroom with huge windows, bright lights, and cameras everywhere. This part was definitely one of the highlights because we actually got to pretend we were news anchors, August even delivered a full practice segment like he'd been doing it for years. It was honestly really fun.



Above: Host of Zip Trips, Gasia Mikaelian

Throughout the tour, we learned how many different people work together to create a single news broadcast writers, editors, camera operators, producers, and so many more. It made us appreciate how much teamwork and timing go into the news we watch every day. Before heading out, we asked questions, thanked our guides for the opportunity, and took a big group selfie to wrap up the day. The trip was inspiring, exciting, and definitely one of the best experiences our journalism class has had this year.



Above: News anchor, Andre Senior

UEFA Euro Futsal 2026

BY ADRIAN QUIJANO

You may have heard of Futbol, but do you know about Futsal? Futsal is a fast-paced, indoor variant of football played on a smaller hard floored court with five players on each side. This is because the area of playing is compact, the ball is smaller and less bouncy. The game highlights close ball control, quick decision-making, and creative footwork. The matches consist of two 20-minute halves, and teams have the ability to make an unlimited number of substitutions, which helps keep the game's tempo intense. The continent of origin is South America, but futsal has become a global sport!

Futsal started in the year 1930 in Montevideo, Uruguay, when a physical education teacher named Juan Carlos Ceriani created a version of indoor football for YMCAs. Originally developed for basketball courts, a rule book for the sport was published in September 1933. Association football was already highly popular in the country, and after Uruguay won gold medals in the 1924 and 1928 Summer Olympics and the 1930 FIFA World Cup, it attracted even more participants and viewers.

Now, futsal even has its own comprehensive international tournament. The tournament is held every four years and involves 16 teams competing for the continental title. Like most football tournaments, the format consists of a group stage phase, which then follows the knockout stage, the quarter-finals, semi-finals, and the final match, where whoever wins takes the trophy home.

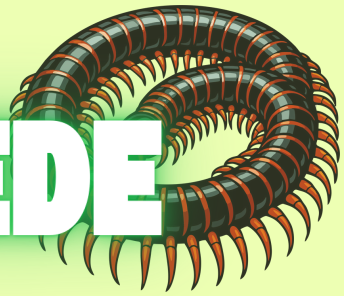
The Futsal Euro tournament will be taking place from January 21 to February 7 2026, co-hosted by Latvia, Lithuania, and Slovenia. The tournament will be held across four different arenas in three different cities.

The 16 teams that have qualified for the UEFA Euro Futsal final 2026 are: Latvia, Lithuania, Slovenia, Portugal, Spain, Ukraine, France, Croatia, Italy, Czechia, Poland, Armenia, Georgia, Belarus, Belgium, and Hungary. The final lineup for the tournament was confirmed in September 2025, after the play-offs concluded.



TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE GROWING SPORT, CLICK THE IMAGE!

MORE LEGS, MORE FACTS
LIFE OF A CENTIPEDE



By William Knightt

Centipedes are fast, predatory arthropods with flattened bodies, distinct jaws, and a pair of legs per body segment. An arthropod is an animal that has a segmented body with an exoskeleton and molts to grow. The centipede has a number of body segments that depends on the species, but can be up to 191. They cover a wide range of the world with a wide variety of habitats. There are an estimated 8,000 species of centipedes, with only about 3,000 described, and they are arranged into 23 families.

While not found anywhere else, South America has the record for the largest species of centipedes. That being scolopendra-gigante, which easily clears 12 inches given enough time to grow, about two - three years. Centipedes primarily eat smaller arthropods, or other insects, but larger species have been seen eating vertebrates of similar size, such as lizards, amphibians, and fruit. Larger and more colorful species possess painful bites, with Old World species having much stronger venom, specifically those from Asia and Africa. Bite reports from old-world species, such as Scolopendra dehaani, seem to leave a wet bite that has lingering pain for days, with some needing medical attention. Death has occurred post-envenomation of centipede bites, but 100% of the time, it was due to existing health problems.



Above: Scolopendra-gigante

Centipedes reproduce with a male spinning a small web which he deposits a spermatophore for the female to pick up. Once a female picks it up, she can carry to for upward to a year before incubating up to 150 eggs.

People keep these interesting creatures as pets and depending on the species, must ensure proper care for their habitat. Centipedes should be kept in a sealed container with ventilation at the soil level, preventing micosis, a fungal infection caused by high humidity, that will eat away at the centipede.

Enclosed cenitpedes should be kept separated, even those of the same species. If enclosed together, they will likely eat each other. In their natural habitat, they may be found together under a rock. This might occur because that area is the perfect conditions for habitat.

If you are interested in learning more about cenitpedes or having one for a pet, you can find a ton of information on their habits and habitat online or stop by a pet store on the occassion that they carry them.

Credit Crushers

Term 3

By Bella Hernandez

Adrian Q.B
Adrian D
Analeigh Z.
Andres N.M
Aniah E.
Anthony C.M
Ashley I.R
Anthony G.
Ashlie C.
Aston H.
Brian A.C
Camila B.O
Christian A.Z
Cinthya H.
Cash S.
Citlali V.R
D'marion S.
Emily S.M.
Emily R.
Hana G.
Ja'lisa Y.
Jacklyne M.R.
Jairo R.M
Jalessa P.
James J.
Jaylene A.
Jesse N.N
Jeremiah T.E
Jesus O.T.
John H.
Jose T.M
Juan H.L.
Julie C.
Kaitlyn F.
Katherine G.E
Kelly M.
Kelly J R.E
Kevin M.
Lilita T.
Layla C.
Luigi F.A
Leilani R.M
Lilyanna P.R
Mareli S.S
Miguel P.B
Oscar G.
Nolan R.
Nayra S.
Salma M.R
Sarahi R.
Stephanie B.Z
Erica P.
Teresita P.
Valeria O.G
Vanessa L.R
Yaretzi J.C
Yisel Z.H
Zada L.
Zamara B.
Zaria W.
Zayuri L.V
Ziyeer L.

Happy Birthday

December

By August Abbott

Anthony F.G. 12/02

Aakarsh K. 12/02

Yisel Z.H. 12/05

Edwin M.P. 12/06

Jennifer D. 12/07

Tia P. 12/08

Lillia A.A. 12/09

Antonio P. 12/09

Jazmyne A. 12/10

Anthony G. 12/10

Brandly T.C. 12/10

Nathalia H.C. 12/11

Maryjane S. 12/11

Omar P. 12/11

Ashley M. 12/12

Brian A.C. 12/16

Laylah G. 12/16

America G.V. 12/16

John H. 12/17

Andres N.M. 12/18

Ash W. 12/18

Yarizet C.T. 12/20

Elmer B.M. 12/22

Jesus G.P. 12/23

Va'laijah H. 12/23

Kelly M. 12/23

Bradley T. 12/23

Estefania V.M. 12/24

Leyla G. 12/26

Roberto V. 12/28

Andrew G. 12/29

Vanessa L.R. 12/29

Luigi F.A. 12/31



Happy Birthday January

By Ashley Massa

Jese N.N	01/1
Justin A.G	01/2
Jonathan U.M.	01/3
Ajani T.	01/4
Hana G.	01/5
Jairo R.M.	01/5
Destiny A.N.	01/7
Miriam V.	01/8
Ms. Gemma	01/12
Kameron T.	01/12
Kayla V.	01/18
Cayden K.	01/22
Anthony C.M	01/23
Emma P.	01/25
Ella M.	01/26
Adrian D.	01/27
Salma M.R.	01/28
Linda O.	01/29