



# V.

## WHO'S WRITING YOUR ESSAY?

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*All about AI, pgs. 13-17*



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# VERDE MAGAZINE

February 2023 *Volume 24 Issue 3*



## ON THE COVER

Binary zeros and ones are projected onto Palo Alto High School junior Beck Lynn's face in a photo captured by Editor-in-Chief Meena Narayanaswami. The code is a visual representation of recent AI tool ChatGPT, which is revolutionizing academics and everyday life. The half of Lynn's face without binary conveys the subtlety of AI's ever-changing capabilities that makes its work increasingly indistinguishable from original human work.

### Publication policy

Verde Magazine, a news and features magazine published by the students in Palo Alto High School's Magazine Journalism class, is a designated open forum for student expression and discussion of issues of concern to its readership. Verde is distributed to its readers and the student body at no cost.

### Letters to the editors

The staff welcomes letters to the editors but reserves the right to edit all submissions for length, grammar, potential libel, invasion of privacy and obscenity. Send all letters to [verde.eics@gmail.com](mailto:verde.eics@gmail.com) or 50 Embarcadero Rd Palo Alto, CA 94301.

### Advertising

The staff publishes advertisements with signed contracts providing they are not deemed by the staff inappropriate for the magazine's audience. For more information about advertising with Verde, please contact business managers Felicia Buchholz and Anna Van Riesen at [verdebusiness5@gmail.com](mailto:verdebusiness5@gmail.com).

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# In this issue

## Foreword

Editorials	6
Launch	8
News	10
Sports	12

## Cover

ChatGPT	13
George Santos	16
AI in school	17

## Features

Weather	18
Dyslexia	20
Affirmative action	22

## Profiles

Solar cars team	25
Student mechanic	26
Firefighter hot sauce	28
Buy Nothing Palo Alto	30
Farmers market	32
Katelyn Pegg	34
Latter-day saints	36

## Culture

Nepo babies	38
Art vs. artist	40
Oscars	42
Rom-coms	44
Film photos	46

## Perspectives

Gate 101	48
Academic freedom	50
History vs. housing	52







**FARMERS MARKET** pg. 32

FROM THE EDITORS

# ARCHITECTURE OF THE FUTURE

Another story about ChatGPT?

If it feels like discussions about AI-generated work have taken over your news and social media feeds, we think that that's a good thing. Verde is far from the first publication to cover ChatGPT's production of work that is more humanlike than ever before — but it also will be far from the last, because AI-generated work is not a fad topic. Its relevance is not fleeting.

Now that we are four issues into our terms as editors-in-chief, it is time to try something new. While the magazine is conventionally split by section — Features, Profiles, Culture and then Perspectives — this issue comes with a new category: the cover package.

We urge the student body to explore this section about artificial intelligence and its implications on our lives and schooling. We believe that AI will become an increasingly integral part of all of our lives, with this month and issue making the beginning of this shift.

The software is explored broadly in the feature “Can’t deny the AI” by Digital Director Ashmita Rajmohan and staff writer Divya Gandhi. The writers uncover how teachers are dealing with the new tool and how students are perceiving and using the new technology.

Next, we present two student perspectives by staff writers Nadia Soberg and Ashray Gupta.

Soberg’s “Are you George Santos 2.0?” dives into the Congressman’s recent scandal, arguing that students should take an active role in making sure that they stay honest, unlike Santos, in a world where AI makes academic dishonesty increasingly easy.

In “Adapting to AI,” Gupta reframes the narrative, presenting a case for why the recent developments in AI capabilities should be embraced — not feared — by schools.

We hope Verde’s AI cover package will help inform and contribute new perspectives to the ongoing conversation on the use of AI in our academic and everyday lives.

Outside of AI, this issue offers two writer’s perspectives on issues regarding how our community and education develops that we want to highlight.

In “Canvas Conundrum,” Profiles and Sports Editor Nadav Sternheim highlights the importance of being able to teach controversial topics that have academic value after the firing of a Hamline University Art History adjunct professor for showing an image of the prophet Muhammad.

In “History vs. Housing,” staff writer Asha Kulkarni argues that the city and broader community should balance preserving the history of Palo Alto with ensuring that there is enough affordable housing to support a thriving community, honing in on the controversy surrounding the potential demolishing of the building that was once occupied by Fry’s Electronics.

Overall, we hope that this issue can contribute to ongoing conversations about what our future looks like, ranging from the role of AI in our lives as students to the nuances of weighing the importance of preserving history versus providing affordable housing.

—MEENA, JONAS, YASH, MELODY





**CREEK IN CRISIS** — Seen here over the winter, the flooded streets of Palo Alto caused havoc for the city's residents. Freshman Gavin Zhang was one of many residents living near the creek during the flood. "I think Palo Alto was just not prepared for that kind of storm," Zhang said. Photo: Gavin Zhang

## City must prevent flooding

### PRIORITIZE RENOVATION OF CREEK TO REDUCE DAMAGE

**T**HE BAY AREA HAD a record-breaking rainy season this Dec. and Jan., according to the National Weather Service, it was the rainiest 10-day period since 1862. Averaging over 10 inches of rain, compared to the last five-year-average of 2.8 inches, as reported by Current Results, these storms were unexpected, leading to flooding in Palo Alto and detrimental effects state-wide.

As Palo Alto residents scrambled for sandbags to protect their homes, the question arose as to whether there was anything the city could have done to better prepare for this harsh weather aside from flood damage control and cleaning services.

Currently, there is an ongoing project that would help decrease flooding on the San Francisquito Creek called the San Francisquito Creek project. However, According to the project's senior planner, Claire Raybould, construction has been delayed due to lawsuits and California Environmental Quality Act approvals. We urge

the city to prioritize the project and finish construction to avoid future floods.

Though the Bay Area faced less severe flooding than other coastal areas, the project would reduce flooding by improving flow into the bay. The creek lines the border between the Palo Alto and Menlo Park areas and empties out into the San Francisco Bay, making it a crucial drainage system for local cities.

This project is overseen by the San Francisquito Creek Joint Powers Authority, in cooperation with the U.S. Army Corporation of Engineering, and would widen some parts of the creek and replace the Pope-Chaucer Street Bridge and the Newell Road Bridge.

"Pope-Chaucer Bridge is currently the biggest constraint in terms of allowing the flooding to pass," Raybould said.

Construction on the Newell Road Bridge is expected to launch this year and finish in 2024, with construction on the Pope-Chaucer Bridge following. Once this is complete, the creek will reach a standard

known as the 70-year-flood — how often that storm would occur on average.

"A key goal of the project is to try and move forward with what we came up with for 70-year-flood improvements, and then with the idea that it doesn't preclude future improvements that would allow for the 100 year storm to pass," Raybould said.

While the project has a hefty \$14.8 million cost, as stated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers San Francisco District website, damages from the floods are much more costly compared to the project's price. In just one year the cost to repair the winter season's flooding has been as high as \$28 million. According to an article from AP-News, rainfall in California is only increasing, and could grow 34 percent by 2050 due to climate change. This further emphasizes the need for this project.

All things considered, it is preventing future flooded houses and millions of dollars for city repairs. The project must be prioritized to keep Palo Alto a safe town for all its residents. v



# Legacy admissions outdated

## COLLEGES SHOULD PRIORITIZE MERIT, NOT CONNECTIONS

**C**OLLEGE LEGACY. What even is it? Unfair. That's what legacy is. While it might seem fair or even "nobody else's business" to people who have legacy status, using it to determine admission is unfair.

The college admissions process can be one of the most critical times in a student's life, and there are many factors that determine the results.

Verde believes college admissions should not consider legacy because they are the gatekeeper to higher education and future opportunities that come with it.

According to a 2022 article from College Transitions, primary legacy applicants are 45% more likely to get into a highly competitive college than a non-legacy applicant. In addition to this, according to the book "Poison Ivy," elite schools typically reserve 10-25% of the admitted class for legacies.

Because of this advantage, the role of legacy in college admissions has long been a controversial topic. A 2020 Wall Street Journal stated that more than half of the United States' top 250 universities consider legacy as a part of their admissions process. The additional thought given is believed to have originated from elite institutions to ensure that the children of alumni — who were often also great donors — would continue to support the school and its reputation.

According to a 2020 article in Center for American Progress, the legacy admissions process originated from an idea to keep Jewish students from attending the school but has since grown into affecting multiple groups. The article reported that generally, there are usually more total legacy students

admitted than African American, Latino or Native American students.

An article in The Atlantic reported that today, colleges often defend the continuation of legacy admissions by claiming that it's needed for funding by alumni.

Palo Alto High School junior Jonathan Liu, who is a legacy, said that considering legacy is the most effective way to reward alumni for their financial support to their alma mater.

"It [the legacy admissions process] respects the alumni," Liu said.

From an opposing view, some legacies like seniors Anna Markesky and Elizabeth Fetter say that universities

don't have to find other ways to honor alumni.

"I feel like universities aren't obligated to [honor alumni]," Markesky said.

Fetter echoed this sentiment.

"You are paying the school to go there and receive an education, and you should honor the school, not really the other way around," Fetter said.

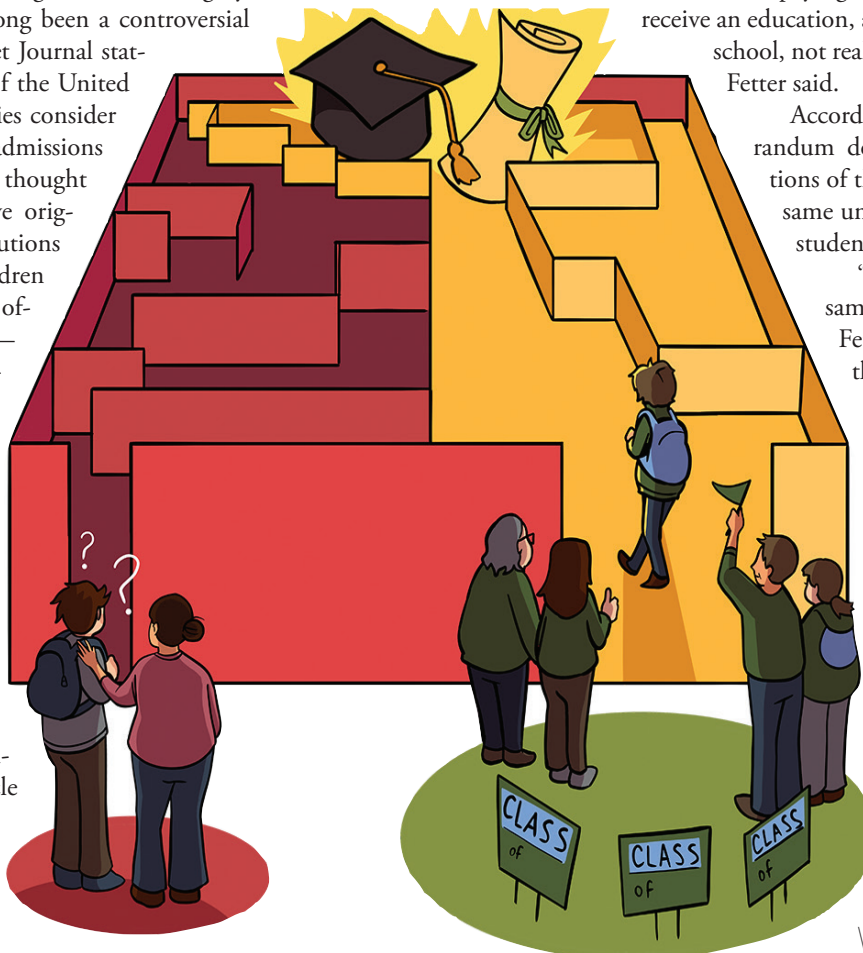
According to an ERN Memorandum document, having generations of the same family attend the same university campus decreases student diversity on campus.

"It's a smaller scope of the same generations of people," Fetter said. "Especially if the legacy is from 60 years ago, it's going to be mostly white males who had that legacy."

While the intention behind legacy admissions may be a way to honor alumni, it is important to consider the potential negative impacts as well as ensure that the process is equitable for all students. Universities should focus on creating a fair and inclusive admissions path for all. v

***You are paying the school to go there and receive an education, and you should honor the school."***

— ELIZABETH FETTER, senior





## ADMIN QUOTE OF THE MONTH



"Failing to prepare is preparing to fail."  
– ERIK OLAH, vice principal

## UPCOMING EVENTS

3/1-18	Theater production program
3/5	Job fair
3/10	Staff development day
3/17	Instrumental pops concert
3/22-23	CAASPP testing schedule
3/28-29	One-acts auditions
4/3	Start of spring break

## ASB ANSWERS

WITH SPIRIT COMMISSIONER EVIE KRAMER



### How is ASB preparing/setting up for prom?

"We have our prom committee. And we're working with a prom planner, essentially, who's helping us pick the venue and the food and like, any activities we want to have, decoration and a theme."

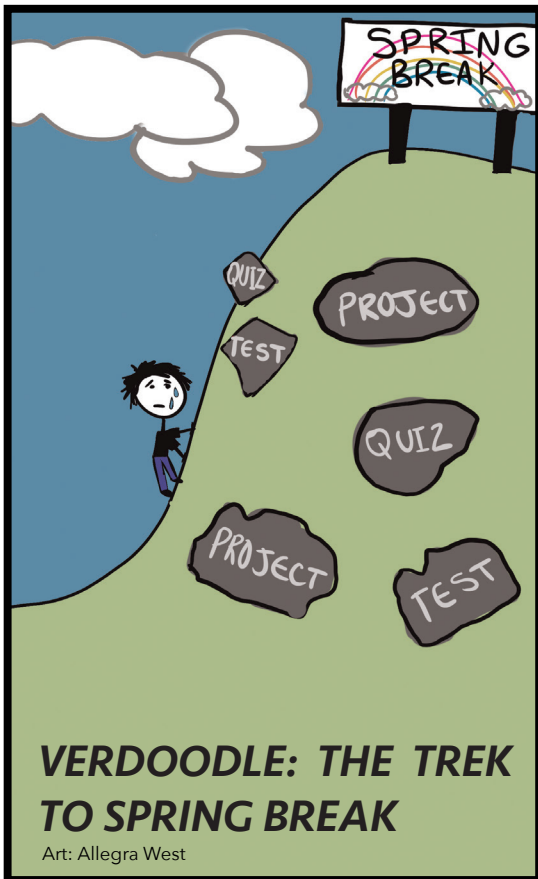
### What is your favorite thing about ASB?

"I think my favorite part of ASB would be getting to see the work that we do positively impact other people. I think it definitely [does], especially with the smaller events to like Cookies on the Quad and Spikeball tournaments. I think that those those are really well-loved by the students on our campus and just a lot of fun to get to plan those."

### What activities is ASB planning in the future?

"Definitely some Spikeball tournaments. I think they're starting to get some more demand for that. And then I'm hoping to play another staff versus students game. There was a lot of like, response to that first one."





## WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH VERBATIM: WHAT ARE SOME THINGS YOU ADMIRE ABOUT THE WOMEN IN YOUR LIFE?



"I respect my mom a lot, and I really love my mom. She always gives a hundred and ten percent for what she does. She does everything with love and care. And she really puts her all into everything she does."

– KYLE PARK, senior



"They're all very supportive and kind, especially my mom and my sister have both been there for me through everything. They're just always very inspired and motivated."

– ANNE THRELKELD, junior



"I admire the care they give for me, the concern they have for whatever I do; the fact that they're always thinking about me, that means a lot."

– SHREYAS SHASHI, sophomore

## GUESS THE AI ART

Following the theme of this issue, we asked an AI art generator to create specific light hearted images. Send in submissions of what you think we asked the AI tool to generate on our Instagram @verdemag; the first 10 people get a Verde Magazine sticker.







**MAKING MUSIC** — Anthony Pineda, creator of Creatrix Institute, explains the principles of connecting with others through rap. “I bring a lot of different topics that can be challenging for people, because they have to deal with people’s real lives,” Pineda said. Photo: Uri Ponte

## School offers rap class to build community

**A NEW HIP-HOP PROGRAM** geared towards music-driven students is taking place on Tuesdays at Palo Alto High School.

The new initiative is led by Anthony Pineda, the creator of Creatrix Institute, an organization centered around the art

of rapping, and uses hip-hop to help kids connect with themselves.

The voluntary 90-minute class started on Jan. 31, and students must be recommended by teachers and selected by Pineda himself after an interview process to join.

Both Principal Kline and Pineda said

they have high hopes for this initiative.

“My goal is to show the students the power of their voice,” Pineda said. “My other goal, really, is to help the students build their community here at Paly.”

by **DIVYA GANDHI**

## Grant Avenue housing approved

**CONSTRUCTION** at 231 Grant Ave. will begin following the Palo Alto Board of Education’s approval of Mercy Housing, an affordable housing organization for Palo Alto teachers.

Grant Avenue will be the first affordable apartment complex for Palo Alto teachers and staff, with the district receiving 29 out of the 110 housing units.

“Buying a house around here is not even a reasonable dream,” Palo Alto High School Spanish teacher Trevor Crowell said. “I know a lot of people choose to live far away so they can trade a commute for some extra saving or spending money.”

by **ANNA GHEREGHLOU**

## Prom venue revealed at winter rally



**RAPTUROUS RALLY** — Palo Alto High School senior Isai Pulido dribbles in the seniors versus staff basketball game at the Feb. 1 winter rally. After a controversial staff victory, the Associated Student Body announced the 2023 Prom location as Cityview at the Metreon. “This years prom location has a really wonderful view of the city which I think will add to the liveliness,” senior Charlie Merkel said. Photo: Cate Graney



## Admin pushes to boost CAASPP rate

**P**ALO ALTO HIGH SCHOOL administrators are encouraging students to participate in CAASPP testing this spring following low participation rates last year.

According to Assistant Principal Erik Olah, CAASPP participation rates affect Paly more than students may realize. Last year, students who did not participate were given a zero, affecting the school's overall score.

"The state requirement is that 95 percent of juniors participate in CAASPP testing," Olah said. "Anything below 95 is like a zero. We had really good scores for the 51 percent that took it ... but when you look at the state dashboard and how it's reported to the state it plummets."

This year, administrators hope to increase participation by better communicating to students the impact of the test, which will take place on March 20 and 21.

"This expectation, this responsibility,

has never been communicated," Principal Brent Kline said. "In the past, people knew that it didn't really matter, but now it does."

Math teacher Gabrielle Juan said that CAASPP testing is beneficial to teachers because it provides another method of measuring student progress and success.

"I think it's important to have information about how much you know, and often times one single test doesn't address that, so you need multiple tests," Juan said.

Sophomore Chloe Amos said she has opted out of CAASPP testing in previous years. Amos said that she and other students would be more inclined to participate in CAASPP if the tests were more aligned with school curriculum.

"I would do it if it was actually part of school and it helped you learn the stuff that you're learning right now," Amos said. "It's not even related to your current subject."

by **LIZZY WILLIAMS**

## Languages to remove level 4 pathway

**I**N AN EFFORT TO FURTHER align with curriculum across the district, Palo Alto High School's World Language Department will remove levels 4 and 4 Honors from French, Japanese and Spanish, effective next school year.

Students who are currently enrolled in level 3 or 3H of those languages may take the Advanced Placement class for each language next year if they choose to continue learning a language at Paly.

"It gives an opportunity for students to actually reach the AP class if they start [a language] when at the high school," Paly's World Language Department leader Carla Guerard said. "[We're] opening it up to more open access for students."

According to Guerard, the department will continue to offer Chinese 4 at Paly, although that may change in the future.

Sophomore Isabelle Carlsen, a current French 3H student, said the change in pathways seems daunting.

"I feel like it's hard and a bit demotivating," Carlsen said. "If you love the lan-

guage but it's hard to pick up the material, it's unfair for someone to have to automatically go to AP."

The change in pathways may affect Carlsen's plans to continue learning French at Paly.

"At the beginning of this year, I was confident that I was gonna go to French [4]," Carlsen said. "Now I'm a bit more hesitant just because of what it [AP French] would entail."

Despite student concerns, Guerard said the removal of levels 4 and 4H will have little impact on the World Language curricula.

"I would think [student readiness] is about the same," Guerard said. "It just offers a different path for students in looking at their schedules and being able to balance them out. If you don't want an AP class your junior year, but you still want to have something that's a little challenging, you could pick the ... Civilization and Culture [course]."

by **LIA CARDWELL**

## Schedule to change

**A** NEW BELL SCHEDULE for next school year is being drafted due to instructional minute concerns.

According to Palo Alto High School Assistant Principal Erik Olah, the bell schedule committee is picking between pushing Advisory to the end of the day or a double prime.

"I don't see any big structural changes [to PRIME]," Olah said.

Olah said the committee will consider student and staff opinions through a bell schedule survey.

"The survey is a chance for students and staff to give feedback," Olah said. "From there the superintendent decides the final schedule."

by **RAHUL SHETTY**  
and **ANDY ROBINSON**



**LEARNING LANGUAGES** — Palo Alto High School Japanese teacher Teruko Kamikihara teaches Kanji to her students. While some world language staff say that the removal of the level 4 language lane won't disrupt students' learning, sophomore Rohan Bhatia said he believes that he may not be ready for AP Japanese having taken Japanese 3 this year. "If I was planning to continue, Level 3 to AP seems like a giant jump, and Level 4 to AP seems much more attainable," Bhatia said. Photo: Cate Graney





**BIG SHOES TO FILL** — Palo Alto High School freshman and midfielder Yara Chaib celebrates after putting the girls soccer team up 1-0 against cross-town rivals Henry M. Gunn High School. The team would go on to win 2-0 after a hard-fought battle. "[Our season] has been really rough," Chaib said. "This game was really important to us, especially against our rivals, and we beat them at home, so it was awesome." Photo: Jonas Pao

## 5 QUESTIONS WITH LOCAL FIGURE SKATING CAPTAIN

### WITH RICHELLE WONG, TEAM CAPTAIN

Palo Alto High School sophomore Richelle Wong established a figure skating team last winter. The team is currently practicing on grass, until it can raise enough money to practice on the ice. Photo: Nadav Sternheim



#### What was the inspiration for creating the team?

"My inspiration for this team was that I've been skating for quite a few years now. But this year, I started doing synchronized skating, which is, as the name suggests, skating in a group. It's been a lot of fun, it's made me realize that skating can be a lot more than just one person skating. You can also meet a lot of people at the same time, and it's really fun."

#### How did you create the team?

"I felt like I talked to half of the Paly staff. But in the end, we kind of decided that the best option was to make it not officially affiliated. It's not an ASB [Associated Student Body] club, and it's not a Paly sport. Originally, I was planning on making it, like all the other high school skating teams, one of the competitive ones that does competitions, but I

realized once I got the team together that people don't seem to be that interested in that. So now we're doing only choreography."

#### How much experience do team members have?

"It's a pretty big range. We have people who haven't skated at all, and we have people who have been skating most of their lives and are doing double jumps."

#### What do you hope to accomplish with the team in the future?

"My main goal is to encourage people from Paly to be introduced to figure skating."

#### Anything else you want people to know?

"You should totally join. If you want more information, email [paloaltofigureskating@gmail.com](mailto:paloaltofigureskating@gmail.com)."



# WHO'S WRITING YOUR ESSAY?



*Can't deny the AI, pg. 14*  
*Are you George Santos 2.0?, pg. 16*  
*Adapting to AI, pg. 17*



# CAN'T DENY THE AI

## IMPLICATIONS OF CHATGPT IN EDUCATION

**I**N THE LAST CENTURY, technology has evolved dramatically, and along with it, education has too. First, educators had to adapt to the invention of calculators, computers, internet access and social media. Now, academia is facing a new breakthrough technology: ChatGPT.

Developed by the research company OpenAI, ChatGPT is a “language machine” that can produce accurate and original human-like responses to user prompts.

A user can type a question into the search bar, hit enter and immediately receive a synthesized response that is almost always formal, grammatically correct and accurate in its content.

As the fastest-growing consumer application in history, ChatGPT reached 100 million active users two months after its release to the public in late November.

Recently, Microsoft — a major investor in OpenAI — announced the incorporation of the chatbot into its Bing search engine; Google is also developing a competing product called Bard.

The widespread adoption of the conversational AI bot and the time, money and

resources being invested by Big Tech companies into its implementation are clear signs that this technology is here to stay.

As the chatbot makes its way into the classroom, educators face the challenge of determining what role AI has in learning — if it has one at all.

The responses ChatGPT provides are original and cannot be spotted by a plagiarism detector, making it particularly troublesome in the eyes of some teachers.

Palo Alto High School sophomore Keerath Pujji said that while cheating is undoubtedly a concern with ChatGPT, it should not be characterized as the only use of the technology.

“Generating ideas for an essay or ideas on a prompt for an essay is okay because,

for me personally, I would just talk about it with my peers and research it,” Pujji said. “I feel like using ChatGPT is not any different from that.”

Journalism adviser Brian Wilson said while he agreed that while positive uses for ChatGPT exist, there is a fine line between utilizing the AI software to improve as a writer and crossing into the territory of academic dishonesty.

“I say all the time to my students, ‘If you want to be a better writer, read a lot,’ and [using ChatGPT] is a way in which you can read another source that is constructing the same type of paper to make you a stronger writer [than] when you do

that on your own,” Wilson said. “The tricky gray area is whether the students understand the difference between the two. Because it’s so easy to slip from ‘I’m going to use it [ChatGPT] to help me’ to ‘I’m going to let it do it for me.’”

The fact that AI-produced content is already at the same caliber of human-written text has raised a larger philosophical question about the value of learning how to write well if one’s work can be whipped up in seconds by a machine.

AP United States History teacher John Bungarden said that the process of writing is important to master as a student regardless of ChatGPT’s capabilities.

“I’m not clear that [using ChatGPT] in any appreciable way does what writing without such machine assistance is supposed to do: to develop the capacity to think about something and articulate it, a skill that is both very difficult to achieve and a wonderful skill to have for life,” Bun-

*Generating ideas for an essay or ideas on a prompt for an essay is okay.”*

— KEERATH PUJJI, sophomore





garden said.

Wilson said that he agreed that being able to write well is vital in life.

“The skills developed in being able to write critically, write creatively, write engagingly, write innovatively ... I believe that those are really important skills for people to be able to follow. And I just think it is guaranteed to help you in the long run,” Wilson said.

In any case, ChatGPT is not infallible and cannot be relied on blindly to produce flawlessly written content, according to English teacher Lizzie Dekraai.

“[English teacher Hunter] Reardon tried ChatGPT and he sent an example out to the [English] department where the software did not answer his question accurately,” Dekraai said. “It got some facts of the story wrong and the overall message was the opposite of what the author intended.”

Currently, the English department is choosing not to make any major changes

to course curriculums, instead trusting the students’ families to talk about using ChatGPT appropriately.

“Parents and families should be having conversations with their students about integrity and responsibility,” Dekraai said.

However, according to Shirley Tokeim, English Department Instructional Lead, there may be changes to the future curriculum.

“We are in discussion about how we use assessments and adjustments that might need to happen to ensure students are doing their own work,” Tokeim said. “This could mean doing the work in class, in real time, not on a computer.”

Wilson said he will also potentially be implementing changes to how his journalism courses are taught given the inevitability of the presence of ChatGPT in students’ lives.

“If I know kids are using [ChatGPT], and I still want them to show that they are

capable of writing on their own, I need to rethink the types of assignments I’m giving, and I might need to rethink the manner in which people are writing them,” Wilson said. “Is it more in-class writing? Is it more literal handwriting versus typing in a Google Doc?”

Ultimately, the positive and negative effects of this new technology are yet to be seen and will take years to pan out.

“The optimistic side of me hopes and thinks that this won’t be too much different than other technological advancements that have happened over the last 200 years,” Wilson said. “It could be a game changer for education, but maybe it won’t be. We will have to wait and see.” v

**OBSSESSED WITH AI** — Palo Alto High School students Riya De Datta and Amani Fossati-Moiane pose with the ChatGPT logo on their faces. “A lot of students are using it [ChatGPT] to help write their assignments,” sophomore Keerath Pujji said.



# ARE YOU **GEORGE SANTOS 2.0?**

## CHATGPT EXACERBATES DISHONEST CULTURE

**W**HEN NEWS BROKE THAT Congressman George Santos of Long Island had fabricated his resume and work experience during his campaign for office, the story took Americans by surprise. Many were shocked that Santos was able to get away with such egregious deceptions.

I was less surprised. To me, Santos's lies were just a larger version of cheating that is happening all over our country in high school classrooms.

The recent release of artificial intelligence platform ChatGPT could exacerbate the already existing epidemic of academic dishonesty that has plagued our schools for years. A quick Google search on cheating at Palo Alto High School will reveal past academic dishonesty scandals, including a cheating scheme involving up to 30 students across various Honors Chemistry classes last year.

The emergence of new technologies like ChatGPT will only make cheating easier for students. As these new technologies emerge, teachers and administrators will attempt to revise their policies in hopes of catching new forms of cheating. However, it is unlikely that they will be able to keep up.

Ultimately, the solution to our cheating crisis lies within ourselves.

I find that one of the most common given reasons for academic dishonesty at Paly is the pressure many students feel to consistently perform at a high level. However, at some point in everyone's life, they will be confronted with the temptation to act dishonestly. High pressure environments should never be an excuse for dishonesty.

Furthermore, rampant cheating only aggravates competition by making students feel like they have to cheat to perform at the same level as their cheating peers.

It is important that we all think about the bigger picture here. Issues of dishonesty and cheating extend far beyond a person's schooling.

Raising kids to be honest increases the likelihood that they will become honest workers and citizens later in life.

A 2009 survey conducted by the Josephson Institute of Ethics found that academic dishonesty in high school leads to lying later in life. Specifically, they found that students who

cheat on exams in high school are three times more likely to lie to a customer or inflate an insurance claim than their peers who did not cheat. Those who cheated in high school are also two times more likely to lie to their bosses, and one and a half times more likely to cheat on their taxes.

Recently, we have seen examples of particularly outrageous forms of dishonesty. Just a few weeks ago, Santos was sworn into office amid a growing list of his fabrications, exaggerations and outright lies regarding his education, work experience and much more. Meanwhile, Palo Alto's own crypto king Sam Bankman-Fried was arrested recently for allegedly defrauding investors and money laundering. Remember Elizabeth Holmes, anyone?

We have to ask ourselves: Where did these individuals learn that cheating and lying was an acceptable way to get ahead?

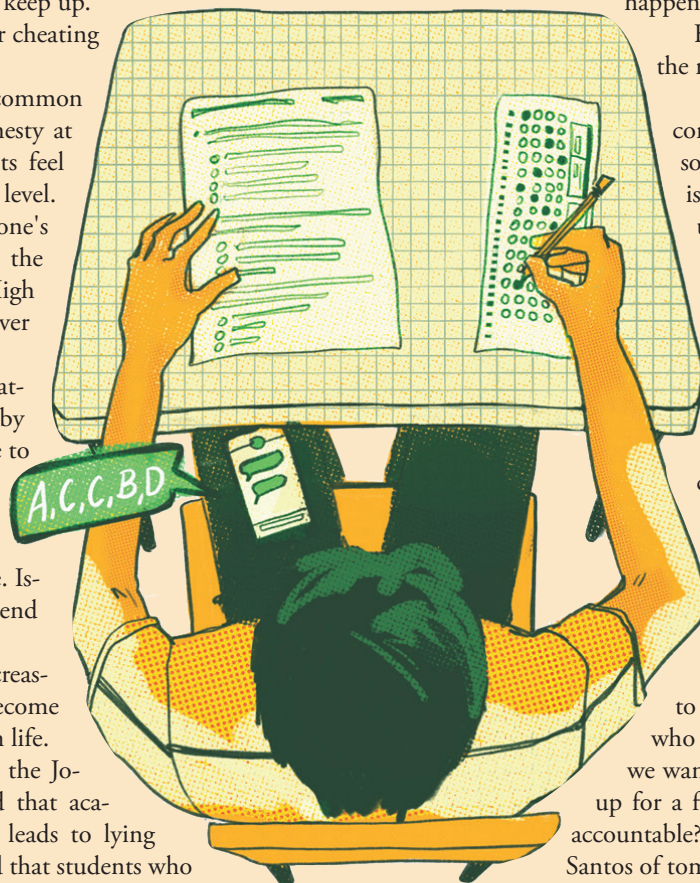
And what to make of their enablers, who stood idly by, knowing full well that their success was laced with lies?

We are quick to mock the likes of George Santos. We are quick to ask, "how did others let this happen?" We are quick to assume that we would never do such a thing, nor would we allow it to happen on our watch.

However, we might take a look in the mirror first.

Many of my peers say Paly's competitive culture is the sole reason for cheating. But whose job is it to change our culture? Is it up to us as individuals to foster a less competitive school environment? We can decide to act honestly. We can decide to value honesty, learning and growth even if, arguably, our school does not.

Our individual actions can inform greater change. It is up to us to realize that high school cheating is no small matter — in fact, it has real world implications. Ultimately, each of us has to decide for ourselves: Do we want to be honest, law-abiding citizens who lead by example for others? Do we want to be whistleblowers, standing up for a fairer society and holding others accountable? Or do we want to be the George Santos of tomorrow? v



# ADAPTING TO AI

## EMBRACE TECHNOLOGY USE IN SCHOOLS

**I**N A WORLD WHERE TECHNOLOGY is advancing rapidly, it's no surprise that artificial intelligence is making its way into the classroom.

While these tools can be incredibly useful in helping students complete their work more efficiently, they also raise important questions about academic integrity.

Did you notice that the previous paragraph was written by an AI tool? And actually, so was that question.

One of the biggest concerns about AI-generated content is that it has now become almost indistinguishable from human work. ChatGPT can now synthesize words and essays in a way that avoids plagiarism — since all of its work truly is original, just generated by AI.

While Turnitin or other existing plagiarism checkers show exactly where text was copied from, new AI detectors are only able to give a percent chance that the text was written by an AI.

OpenAI, the creator of ChatGPT, released a detector with a 9% false positive rate but stated that “it should not be used as a primary decision-making tool.”

Instead of fighting a battle utilizing old techniques that will inevitably lose against a system that grows newer by the second, academic institutions need to adapt to using AI for beneficial uses that don't compromise the learning and original thinking of students.

I urge all teachers to explore or understand the technology before making decisions that could negatively impact the growth of students in this changing world.

The current academic dishonesty policy at Paly follows the basic pattern of due process in an academic setting where the accused is allowed to present evidence in their defense and respond to any evidence brought forward by the teacher.

It is incredibly difficult to prove that a piece of writing is your own, and — with tools that claim to detect generated writing — it could be very difficult to provide concrete evidence that you wrote something.

These detectors hide the inner workings of the technology be-

hind them, which unfortunately makes many people trust them.

I attempted to write a small piece in a similar writing style to what ChatGPT would generate and the detector immediately flagged my writing as 99.8% fake even though the writing was my own original work.

The burden of ensuring these powerful new technologies aren't abused falls to the companies that create them.

While OpenAI is working on “watermarking” its text to prevent it from being submitted as original work by controlling the patterns of the writing to be caught by a detector, students can simply paraphrase the watermarked words since the detection relies on the order of the specific words and punctuation.

AI tools are advancing at such a rapid pace that it's extremely difficult to control their usage, since they are objectively unlike anything students have used to cheat in the past.

As tools like this become more widespread, schools will have to adapt. Incorporating AI into education should not be viewed as a replacement for traditional

teaching methods, but rather as a supplement.

AI is power, and it's up to us to use it in a productive manner. The purpose of any academic institution is to teach students to be ready for later life. Students will have access to, and likely utilize, AI outside the classroom, so it should not be excluded completely from schools.

An example of a productive use is using these tools to enhance learning or save time by not doing repetitive tasks. I can see a future where AI can be a huge factor in improving equity by providing services to less fortunate students that the more fortunate could get with private tutors and counselors.

I urge all teachers to understand the detector technology they are trusting to avoid the possibility of unknowingly framing students and subjecting them to the mercy of the academic dishonesty policy. v

*AI is power, and it's up to us to use it in a productive manner.*

*Academic institutions need to understand how to incorporate the tools into their learning instead of fighting a battle utilizing old techniques that will inevitably lose against a system that grows newer by the second.*



Text by OTTO KISS MEYERFREUND and NADIA SOBERG

# FLOOD FIASCO

## RESIDENTS REFLECT ON THIS YEAR'S STORMS



**RAIN RIVER** — Palo Alto resident Nana Chancellor said she watched the water rise in the San Francisquito Creek on New Year's Eve. "The speed at which [the water] rose and came down the street was really shocking," Chancellor said. Photo: Nadia Soberg

**W**HEN PALO ALTO High School parent Nana Chancellor left her house on New Year's Eve, it was raining without signs of a flood. Upon returning, only 15 minutes later her street had filled with water. Police with loudspeakers lined the street, directing people not to drive down it. Chancellor described seeing splashes of water as cars drove down the street.

"There was a wave coming down from people driving to try to get cars to the street," Chancellor said. "So I took off and rolled up my pants and just walked home. The whole block was muddy."

The beginning of this year brought record-breaking storms throughout Palo Alto and the Bay Area where residents saw power outages, flood warnings and powerful winds. Flooding and fallen trees prompted various road closures, particularly roads with underpasses, such as El Camino Real.

According to AP Environmental Science teacher Nicole Loomis, this kind of

extreme weather event may become more common due to climate change.

Loomis said that this year's floods were in part caused by a specific weather pattern that may become more common during years of heavy rainfall.

"What they're seeing, at least on the East Coast, is you might be getting the same amount of precipitation in a year but instead of it raining every other day for a small amount, you're getting two or three rain events a month with massive amounts," Loomis said.

In Palo Alto, this rainfall has particularly impacted Crescent Park due to its proximity to the San Francisquito Creek. Nana Chancellor and her husband Brian Chancellor currently live in Crescent Park.

"I grew up in Palo Alto, and it's the first time I've actually experienced the flood," Brian Chancellor said. "It was the sort of thing where it just felt like once it started flooding, it came pretty fast."

Brian Chancellor said he remembers seeing debris floating through the creek as

it flooded.

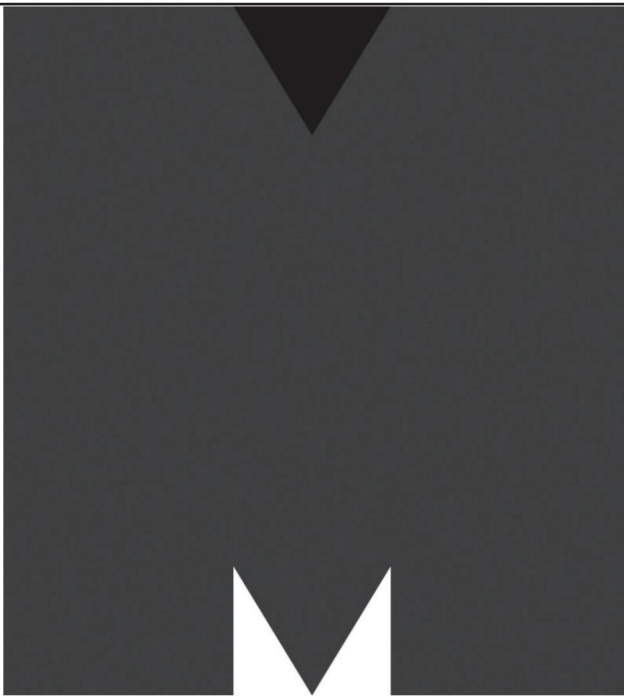
"I've heard that there were two refrigerators that ultimately got removed," he said.

Fellow Crescent Park resident Elizabeth Lee said she witnessed a similar scene.

"The creek rose especially high, especially fast," Lee said. "I just remember standing by it for a while and seeing lots of logs floating by and there was a pile of rubble, of logs. ... It was really something looking out and seeing the water just right up level with, almost level with the top of the berms."

Lee met Palo Alto Mayor Pat Burt in the midst of the flood.

"I waded through some of [the flood water] and I ended up meeting who was then the mayor of Palo Alto, Pat Burt, standing in front of our house along with another city councilman," Lee said. "So I chatted with him and he said 'I'm the mayor,' and I said 'Oh, hi!' and the councilman said 'Yeah, looks like that house got especially bad' and he pointed to our house." v



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## SCREENING MAY SOLVE CALIFORNIA'S LITERACY CRISIS

**A**S THE THIRD anniversary of the COVID-19 lockdown approaches, California remains in a literacy crisis. According to the state's latest Smarter Balanced test, only 42.1% of third-graders are meeting grade level reading standards, a 6.4 point decrease from 2019. California is one of only 10 states that has not mandated dyslexia screenings for all students.

The consequences of not catching learning disorders early are dire; the Yale Center for Dyslexia warned that intervention for students falling behind in reading is essential before the third grade.

Palo Alto High School junior Jamie, whose name has been changed to protect her privacy, was diagnosed with dyscalculia, a numerical learning disorder similar to dyslexia, in 7th grade.

"It was super hard for me because I didn't have the accommodations I needed, so I'd have to go after school to meet with my teachers every single day," Jamie said. "I had no idea

dyscalculia even existed, so I was just clueless." There are many

education Committee declined to bring it to a vote, ending the bill before it could reach the House floor.

other undiagnosed students who struggle similarly because they don't have the right accommodations that they need.

"We should be screening for even more than dyslexia," Jamie said. "A lot of kids have things like ADHD and aren't diagnosed, but unless you have an official diagnosis you can't get a 504 [accommodation plan]."

Though California has poured millions of dollars into early literacy resources over the past decade, it remains one of the last 10 states in the nation not to mandate screening for dyslexia.

SB-237, a bill proposed in 2021 by Senator Anthony Portantino, aimed to mandate screenings for K-2 students beginning in the 2022-23 academic year. But

despite uncontested approval in the Senate, the Assembly Ed-

Opposition by the California Teachers Association played a key role in the bill's failure.

In a 2021 letter to the Chair of the Assembly Education Committee, the CTA expressed concerns that mandated screenings would take away from instructional time and might incorrectly identify English language learners as disabled.

The Palo Alto Unified School District has reckoned with how to address dyslexia locally as well; the initial results of a fall 2019 screening identified 26% of students in grades 1–3 as at-risk of being dyslexic.

According to PAUSD board member Jennifer DiBrienza, it became clear in the process of writing PAUSD's 2017 resolution on dyslexia that the struggles students face in reading extend far beyond one disability.

"At first the discussion was just 'these kids are struggling, do they have dyslexia?'" DiBrienza said. "But we came to understand ... not all reading struggles are dyslexia, and there are many other conditions that can cause reading struggles too."

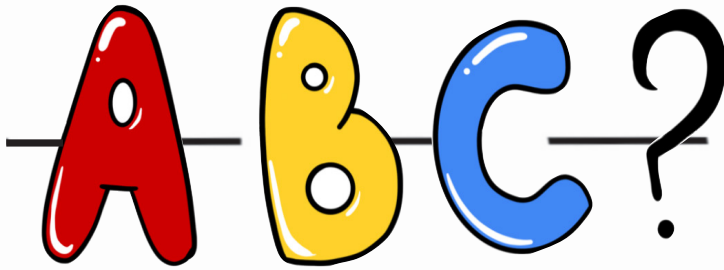
Paly history teacher DJ Shelton, who was diagnosed with dyslexia in the second

*Students [with undiagnosed dyslexia] definitely slip through cracks because they're able to come up with coping mechanisms that allow them to function in a classroom setting."*

— DJ SHELTON, teacher

*"We should be screening for even more than dyslexia."*

— JAMIE, junior



grade, said that teachers aren't always able to spot those reading struggles in the classroom.

"Depending on how severe your dyslexia is, you can come up with coping mechanisms, like focusing on visual memory and talking things out," Shelton said. "Students [with undiagnosed dyslexia] definitely slip through cracks because they're able to come up with coping mechanisms that allow them to function in a classroom setting."

PAUSD consequently launched the Every Student Reads Initiative, which aims for 100% of students to read at grade level by the end of third grade.

According to PAUSD's 2021-22 annual report, K-5 students are screened semestertly using the Shaywitz DyslexiaScreen, a program that separates students into two groups: at-risk for dyslexia and not-at-risk.

Those identified as at risk are given extra support; as of 2019, over 450 students across the district's 12 elementary schools are receiving intervention from reading specialists, English Language specialists, and reading intervention teachers. High schoolers take reading comprehension tests through the Universal Protocol for Accommodations in Reading. These efforts appeared largely successful, especially among groups historically with an

achievement gap.

Results from state testing in spring of 2022 show that the amount of students "near" or "meeting" standards increased 15.8 percentage points for low-income students, 16 points for students with disabilities and 8.6 points for Latino students, exceeding the 2021 goal of a three percentage point increase.

UCSF has partnered with the state of California to develop a free screener called Multitudes, which will be released next year in English, Spanish and Mandarin to school districts.

The initial pilot was launched in a dozen school districts last year, and UCSF scientists plan to expand it to more districts in the coming fall. Experts suggest that universal screenings do not have to be delayed until Multitudes' release. The investment of \$30 million in Multitudes may benefit districts that cannot afford ex-

isting screeners, which cost about \$10 per student. Additionally, with new leadership in the Assembly Education Committee, renewed attempts for a statewide mandate could succeed.

"What worries me is that in an effort to get kids to grade level, ... we're losing a bigger picture of what it means to love literature, to learn from it, and make connections to your life," DiBrienza said. v

**"Not all reading struggles are dyslexia, and there are many other conditions that can cause reading struggles too."**

— JENNIFER DIBRIENZA, Board of Education member

Source: PAUSD ESRI Progress Report, Aug 2022

**22%**

**of socioeconomically disadvantaged students performing below state standards**



**16%**

**increase in English learners reading near or above standards from 2018 to 2022**



**4%**

**increase in 3rd grade students reading near or above state standards from 2018 to 2022**





Text by ALMA BENDAVID and ASHA KULKARNI

# DEFINING DIVERSITY

## EXPLORING THE ROLE OF AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

**ESSAYS, ACADEMIC** transcript and extracurriculars. These are only a few of the boxes students fill in on their college applications each year. But students are asked to check one box that cannot be curated: their race.

Should admissions officers consider a student's race when deciding to admit them? California voters said no in 1996 and 2020. That question will now be answered nationwide in June.

The United States Supreme Court saw two cases on Oct. 30: *Students for Fair Admissions v. University of North Carolina* and *Students for Fair Admissions v. Harvard*. These cases both dealt with race-conscious admissions to universities, also known as "affirmative action."

It is widely believed that the conservative majority on the Supreme Court will rule to severely limit the practice.

However, Palo Alto High School senior Johannah Seah said she worries that striking down affirmative action would increase inequity.

"My mom personally benefited from affirmative action as an immigrant, so I know that these policies are helpful and inclusive," Seah said. "White Americans will

always be privileged in education. By making it [college admissions] race blind, you're taking away that nuance."

According to Sally Chen, education equity program manager for the civil rights nonprofit Chinese for Affirmative Action, the origins of affirmative action were centered around reparations, not diversity.

"How do we account for the legacies of years and years of particularly Black people in this country being systemically excluded from opportunities?" Chen said.

But now, Chen said higher institutions use affirmative action toward a different goal.

"It [affirmative action] allows universities to consider race ... alongside things like geography, religion, gender equality, for the purpose of having a diverse student body," Chen

said.

A lack of diversity in school can have an adverse effect on students, according to Castilleja sophomore Sophie Profit, who is of Mexican descent.

Profit said she has noticed a lack of representation of her ethnic community at her school.

"People who are underrepresented at

my school sort of stick together and form smaller friend groups," Profit said. "When you can't identify with many people at your school it becomes really hard to fit in."

Despite the impact diversity has on students' education, measures to increase diversity have often been challenged. In a 2007 ruling, the Supreme Court found it unconstitutional for a Seattle school district to use race as a tiebreaker for admissions.

Another case evaluating possible discrimination at Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, an elite Virginia high school that considered factors such as income and English-language proficiency when admitting students, is now making its way through federal court.

Starting in 1986 to reduce racial isolation, Palo Alto Unified School District's Voluntary Transfer Program busses students in from the Ravenswood City School District in East Palo Alto.

While Chen said that it is unlikely that programs like Palo Alto's will be directly affected by the Supreme Court's decisions, she said she is concerned that people's perceptions of the role of race in education will be changed.

"In the potential aftermath of a negative decision ... I think talking about race could still be important to how you learn about who you are and the work you want to do," Chen said. "That is still allowed and students shouldn't feel like they need to hide parts of their identity." v

Should affirmative  
action be  
used in public  
university  
admissions?

53.4% of students  
surveyed said  
yes

*Data presented is from an opt-in survey by Verde Magazine of 175 Palo Alto High School students and was collected from Feb. 5 to Feb. 9 through a digital form published on Schoology pages and Verde social media. Responses were anonymous and all questions were optional.*

# What is the responsibility of schools to ensure diversity?



**Marc Tolentino**

Palo Alto High School English teacher

"I think diversity is incredibly important. No matter your race, culture, socioeconomic class, your ability levels, your gender expression and identity and sexual orientation. No matter what that is, you come through life with a unique perspective. And the more diversity we have, one: more people get represented; two: more people's identities get validation, meaning that they have more of a sense of belonging, and three; the learning that comes of it will be inclusive and empathetic, which could let education and people's careers go anywhere." Photo: Alma Bendavid



**Airelana Williams**

Palo Alto High School freshman

"Talk about it more often and have the whole school be able to be involved in activities." Photo: Asha Kulkarni



**Sabela Chelba**

Palo Alto High School sophomore

"It's worth it to try and ensure diversity, but at the same time, merit should always come over diversity. But then that becomes tricky because academic merit is largely based on lower education and because of the history of race in this country, lower education is not accessible to everyone equally." Photo: Alma Bendavid



**August Mondragon**

Palo Alto High School junior

"Schools definitely have a responsibility to ensure diversity. In private schools it might be slightly less just because they're not publicly owned and organized, but I still think schools generally have a responsibility." Photo: Asha Kulkarni



**Gabriel Chakmakchi**

Palo Alto High School sophomore

"Schools have a responsibility to promote diversity. Because as you proceed in life, you're going to be met with people from different cultural backgrounds, and I think school is the perfect opportunity for people to start to get exposed to other cultures so that in the future, you're able to communicate and adapt to other work styles." Photo: Alma Bendavid





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By ANNA GHEREGHLOU

# SOLAR POWERED SUCCESS

## ECO-FRIENDLY CARS RACING ACROSS THE NATION



**S**PARKS FLY as Palo Alto Students breakdown metal parts to create, a solar car — a model vehicle powered by the sun — built by the Palo Alto Solar Vehicles Team. The team is a student-run organization of 15 Paly students and is open to local teens planning to design, build and race vehicles powered by the sun.

The team competes in the Formula Sun Grand Prix, a national solar car race, and other competitions. Stanford University junior and Solar Car Team Lead Benjamin Go said they aim to promote education and interest in renewable energy and sustainable transportation.

“We’ve just started by prototyping our car, and we’re researching materials,” sponsorship leader and Paly junior Alaap Nair said. “This usually takes around two years to create one.”

When Palo Alto Solar Vehicles was founded in 2022.

“Building something that can be adopted by a company and is something we can use to race in a competition is super intriguing,” Nair said.

Another local team is the Stan-

ford Solar Car Project, affiliated with Stanford. Their goal is to create efficient, technologically advanced cars.

“Many of the components [to building solar cars] can get difficult, just because they’re not necessarily producing sufficient volumes for topical cars,” Go said. “Many of the car’s parts start from motorcycles and bicycles. There is great variety in the parts we get.”

The process of constructing one solar car takes about two years. This period is filled with designing, testing and building. So far, the Stanford team has built 13 cars and used them in competitions worldwide.

“The first phase is a year, and that’s the design phase in which we ensure that we have the most aerodynamic shape for our car,” Go said. “The second half is the manufacturing

and testing phase in which we create the car.”

Solar cars reduce the need to burn fossil fuels which decreases air pollution and greenhouse gasses.

“There’s something very alluring to the solar car team, being on the leading edge of sustainable innovation,” Go said.

Nair mentions

that by participating in a solar car team, individuals can contribute to developing clean energy solutions and positively impact the environment.

“You learn design software, you’ll learn different electronics, [and] how to work with electronics,” Nair said. “I recommend solar car teams for people interested in robotics. It’s a great way to experience hands-on building and designing.”

*“There’s something very alluring to the solar car team being on the leading edge of sustainable innovation.”*

— BENJAMIN GO, Stanford University junior

*“You learn design software, you’ll learn different electronics, [and] how to work with electronics.”*

— ALAAP NAIR, Palo Alto High School junior

**SPEWING SPARKS** — Palo Alto High School junior Alaap Nair learns how to weld metal by practicing the basic metallurgy techniques. Building something that can be adopted by a company and is something we can use to race in a competition is super intriguing,” Nair said. Photo: Polina Van Hulsen



# A driven worker

## STUDENT AUTO MECHANIC BREAKS BARRIERS

**T**IRE CHECKS AND OIL CHANGES are just the beginning of Palo Alto High School senior Sophie Yang's mechanics repertoire.

These are only some of the skills she learned after spending a year working at a Palo Alto auto shop (Verde is withholding the name of the shop) — however, her time at the shop wasn't only filled with joy, Yang said: Both customers and even her co-workers doubted her ability to work as a mechanic.

During a recent visit to the Palo Alto High School auto shop (not the professional garage she worked at), it was clear Yang knew her way around an engine.

According to Yang, she was initially hired because her demographic as a female surprised the owner.

"He actually pretty much called me back more out of curiosity rather than thinking that I [would] actually get the job," Yang said.

At first, Yang's intentions were to make money on the side.

"I just was looking for a job because I want to make a little extra money," Yang said. "But I also wanted to get a job that would pay a lot and that I felt like, would be worth it."

Working in the shop, Yang learned unique skills but faced obstacles as the first and only female employee. In the shop, it's policy to ask for customers' phone numbers to contact them when work is complete. But, even this policy rule had its challenges for Yang.

"I'd say 60% of the time when it was a couple that came into the shop, the man would be like, 'No, you can get my girlfriend's phone number' or 'No, you can get my wife's phone number,'" Yang said.

Unlike her male counterparts, Yang said customers doubted her ability to operate and repair cars.

"Even though we're in the Bay Area, which is a super liberal and accepting area, people do have a lot of internalized misogyny," Yang said. "I think a lot of people don't notice that they have this internalized sexism."

While frustrating, Yang said that the questioning of customers did not keep her from feeling confident in her abilities.

"I was hired to work here, I am competent," Yang said. "This is my job. I work on 70 cars a day."

After working to prove her worth to her co-workers, they soon realized that as a female employee, Yang brought a unique perspective and skillset.

Not only was she the one to create the shop's emergency plan — fire hazard escape routes and other paperwork required by the government — but she was also the person customers turned to when they did not know what was being done to their car.

She said she also entertained the children of customers and explained how their car was being fixed.

"My boss ended up realizing if a kid likes coming to our shop, usually the parent will return and usually you get more loyal customers," Yang said.

Reflecting back on the time that she worked at the auto shop, Yang said she can think of many great memories she made and skills she learned, but ultimately she said she feels like her journey toward gaining the trust of her coworkers and customers was the most valuable thing she learned.

"[For] a lot of customers really, I could see their attitude changing towards me," Yang said. "The most rewarding part of the job was to see people starting to respect me, at least in the industry." v



**OIL CHANGE** — Palo Alto High School senior Sophie Yang pops the hood of the car at Paly's auto shop to measure the amount of oil in the car. "I would change the filter and then I would add in the oil and then I would top off all their coolant, brake fluid [and] power steering," Yang said. Photo: Rahul Shetty

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# CAN YOU HANDLE THE HEAT?

## FIREFIGHTER HOT SAUCE FUNDS SCHOLARSHIPS

**I**F LIFE GIVES YOU LEMONS, make lemonade. ... I was given peppers, so I made pepper sauce,” said Lee Taylor, retired firefighter and owner of Palo Alto Firefighters Pepper Sauce.

The pepper sauce bottles can be found on the shelves of grocery stores all over the Bay Area, and Taylor’s twist on this life lesson is emblematic of his path from a career in firefighting to becoming a hot sauce business owner — and community hero.

Taylor began his culinary journey back in 1994 at Palo Alto Fire Station 5 on Arastradero Road. During his years as a firefighter, a surplus of peppers grown in the station’s garden led Taylor to cook up a batch of hot sauce with them, which he then gave out to friends and family. After receiving lots of praise, Taylor decided to increase his pepper planting.

“I planted some more peppers, more than I did the first year, with the intention of, ‘Okay, I’ll make a little bit more sauce,’” Taylor said. “Well, that went on for 10 years — planting more, making more, planting more, making more and near the end there, I was making about 40 gallons of hot sauce a year in the kitchen.”

Once he started selling bottles, Taylor found success quite early: the first test batch of 500 bottles sold out within a week. After entering the Fiery Foods Show in Albuquerque, New Mexico in 2014 to expand his connections, he won first place.

The proceeds made from hot sauce sales go toward the Palo Alto Firefighters Charitable Fund, a program that sends students to college every year.

“The scholarship program to date has given away 180 college scholarships,” Taylor said. “I’m ultra, ultra proud of that. My goal

was one scholarship per year and we’ve been doing it since 2003, so 20 years and we’ve done 180, exceeding my goal, which is fantastic.”

Funding the scholarship program has been Taylor’s goal from the start; before the birth of Palo Alto Firefighters Pepper Sauce, he would ride his bike from San Francisco to Los Angeles, collecting sponsors, in order to raise money for the scholarships. The company became his way to continue this work.

In his last year of bike riding, Taylor was hit by three separate cars, which pushed him to find another way of making money along with the encouragement of his friends.

“Two of my friends ... said, ‘What if you sold that hot sauce you’ve been making for all these years and didn’t ride your bike?’” Taylor said. “You could make money all year long. It wouldn’t be a one-time thing, and you won’t die selling hot sauce.”

While Taylor’s hot sauce business has since blossomed from its humble beginnings into a successful pepper sauce company, it has remained family-oriented. Taylor runs the business with his son, and the recipes listed on their website are his wife’s creative concoctions.


“When I made it, I was kind of like, this is gonna be great for tacos or burritos or on eggs, but since I’ve had years and decades of it, it’s phenomenal on Asian food, Italian food, all kinds,” Taylor said. “Those recipes that are on the website are inventions of hers [his wife’s] that we have eaten for years.”

*I wanted to return that favor, that gift.”*

— LEE TAYLOR, Palo Alto Firefighters Pepper Sauce owner

The company produces three kinds of sauces: Original Pepper Sauce, XX Habanero Sauce and XXX Ghost Pepper Sauce. The sauce is available both online and in-store in 82 chain



A stylized illustration of a firefighter in a red helmet and jacket, holding a box labeled 'PEPPER SAUCE'. The firefighter is depicted in a dynamic, crouching pose, with one leg extended forward. The background is a warm, orange-red color with wavy, flame-like patterns. The firefighter's jacket is dark red, and the helmet is a lighter red. The box is white with the words 'PEPPER SAUCE' in bold, black, sans-serif capital letters. The firefighter's face is smiling, and he has a mustache. The overall style is reminiscent of a comic book or a graphic novel.

and independent retailers in California and at many more locations in 18 other states.

Despite a setback during the pandemic, where the company experienced a loss of 60% of its wholesale customers, Taylor said he is looking to bounce back and continue to grow the company.

Taylor said that after growing up in a single-parent household and struggling at times to eat, he is grateful for the people in his life that helped put his life on track, inspiring him to continue giving back to the community through pepper sauce.

"I got a little nudge, I got a little help, and I feel very fortunate for that," Taylor said. "I wanted to return that favor, that gift." v





# One man's trash, *another man's treasure*

## TRADING THROUGH LOCAL FACEBOOK GROUP

**H**OW MANY PIECES OF clothing have you bought in the past year? 10? 20?

If you're anything like the average American, it would be 64 items, as consumers are buying five times more pieces per year than in 1980 according to Smartasset. But even more frightening is what's discarded: 81.5 lbs of a person's wardrobe goes to landfill every year, according to Earth.org. Americans are buying more goods than ever, and consequently throwing away more than ever.

Although solutions such as second-hand selling and thrift stores have been around for a long time, the Buy Nothing project attempts to provide a completely free solution for the excessive waste over-consumption is causing. Members of local community Facebook groups post items they no longer need, allowing other members to take the items for free. Totalling at over 4 million participants, the project has spread to 44 countries with posted items ranging

from clothing to leftover dinner, as reported by the Today Show.

One local branch is Buy Nothing Palo Alto, a community Facebook group, further divided into four location-based groups. This specific group is based in the southeast portion of Palo Alto, consisting of 860 people.

While the group has an incentive to give, it's also an opportunity to get. For many group members, it's a way to acquire unique items that they

wouldn't be able to find elsewhere. For Rowena Chiu, one of three co-admins of the group, it was a quirky English tea pot in the shape of a marmalade jar.

However, for many, what beats receiving items free of charge is the community aspect, which allows neighbors and members to bond over the gift of giving.

Buy Nothing member Patti Regehr described getting involved in the group and being able to meet people under the restrictions of COVID lockdown.

"During COVID, I wasn't really going to any stores or doing anything," Regehr said. "Going and picking up things was really brightening my day, and also just helping and getting more involved. ... It started building a really different community I wasn't [previously] part of."

At first Chiu became involved in the group to declutter while moving homes. When she heard the group was looking for admins, Chiu volunteered for the position.

"I think people are often surprised by how many rules [there are] and the extent of the training and so on," Chiu said. "The way that the three of [the admins] have divided our duties is unique to our group."

Chiu's duties as co-admin include implementing features such as "Tip Tuesdays," where she offers advice on how users might give and gratitude posts thanking people for positively received items. Vicky


*"I enjoy the thought of [donated items] having an active life somewhere else."*

— ROWENA CHIU, Buy Nothing admin

*"It started building a really different community I wasn't [previously] part of."*

— PATTI REGEHR, Palo Alto resident



 Join group



Hsu — another admin — purely handles admissions into the group, demonstrating the organized operations behind the Facebook group.

When it comes to environmental impact, an often discussed question is how to decrease waste on an individual level. AP Environmental Science teacher Nicole Loomis believes movements such as Buy Nothing are a good way to participate in creating a change.

“I think that for an individual, they can be very effective,” Loomis said. “It really just comes down to how many individuals are participating and how effective it is in the grand scheme of things.”

To combat overconsumption, Loomis suggests that individuals to buy more durable items that can last longer, or consider second hand as more solutions for the average consumer.

Regardless, Buy Nothing groups turn one person’s trash to another’s treasure while reducing waste and bringing communities closer.

“I enjoy the thought of [donated items] having an active life somewhere else,” Chiu said. “Rather than having things sit around and gather dust just because they still hold some financial value.” v



## Danit Bismanovsky

“Regift from a precious group member. Waterpik water flosser. Absolutely obsessed with it. So much that I upgraded. Your dental hygienist will thank you.”



## Rowena Chiu

“Somebody gifted me a teapot and English tea cups that are shaped in the shape of a marmalade jar. And I thought that was the best thing ever.”





# meet me at the MARKET

VENDORS ON CALIFORNIA AVE.  
CONNECT LOCAL COMMUNITY

**E**VERY SUNDAY MORNING, the stretch of California Ave. between El Camino Real and Birch Street comes alive with locally grown produce, freshly prepared food and live music. The farmers market is a point of contact for Palo Altans to meet local farmers and taste a wide variety of fresh fruit and vegetables from all over Northern California.

Christopher Gardner, author and Stanford nutrition studies

professor, said that it is important to attend the farmers market because it allows consumers to form relationships with farmers.

“Both as a consumer and a scientist in the department of medicine that’s very concerned about how disconnected we have become from food, going to the farmers market is just amazingly refreshing to me,” Gardner said. “These are the people who grow food on their land, and they bring it here.”

Gardner also noted the unique benefit of knowing where and how the food at the market was treated and grown.

“We go to the grocery store and go down one aisle after another, you never see who produces your food, and you grab whatever looks tasty,” Gardner said. “When you’re at the farmers market, you get to see the food and you get to ask ‘Where’s your farm? How are things going? Are you trying to be organic or not?’”

The vendors come from all walks of life bearing a wide variety of products. Verde had the opportunity to speak with a

few; here is what we found.

## Bread Apeel & Gourmet Crepes

One of the most familiar and beloved stands at the market is the ever-busy banh mi and crepe stand. The Nguyen family has been cooking up the delicious creations for 13 years.

According to stand worker Henry Nguyen, the farmers market business is lucrative and the community is welcoming.

“It’s the environment, and the people right here are really nice,” Nguyen said. Nguyen also noted that part of the reason

his family loves the market is the generations of community members that continue to return.

“The kids grow up, they eat, they travel, they always come back,” Nguyen said. “They go to school out of state, but they always come back and they still come here to support us.”

Palo Alto High School senior Brooke Threlkeld likes to visit the stand to buy crepes whenever she can.

“I come fairly often, a couple times a month,” Threlkeld said. “Because I live pretty close by, it’s pretty easy to come and get it in the mornings on Sundays, and the crepes taste really good.”

## Allard Farms

For Allard Farms in Westley, California, it’s all about family and tradition. And fruit. The family-owned business sells a variety of brightly colored organic fruits and vegetables. Allard Farms has been operating at the Cal Ave. market since it opened, but they have been in business since 1909. At their stall in the Cal Ave. farmers market, Jack Manetti is in charge.

According to Manetti, the Palo Alto community is a lucrative market for their organic produce.

“It’s the community here, the pricing,” Manetti said. “It’s a high value customer, so





**STOCKING SHELVES** — Jack Manetti arranges Allard Farms' supply of walnuts. "We've been in the business for over 100 years," Manetti said. Photos: Ajin Jeong

they're willing to pay the prices for organic fruit."

From the time that Manetti has spent at the market, the main takeaway that he has observed is the way generations of people return to the market, sometimes years later with their own children, similar to Nguyen's statement.

"The kids grow up and you deal with their kids along with the parents," Manetti said.

### Houweling Nurseries Oxnard

Beverly Tamai, a Houweling employee, dons a tomato-shaped hat made of red felt as she carefully cuts tomatoes off their stems.

Their tomatoes are grown in greenhouses hydroponically — using nutrient-rich solutions instead of soil. Because of this, Tamai's tomatoes weren't flooded by the rainfall, but were affected in other ways.

"We need sunlight and we need a consistent temperature," Tamai said. "Trying to control that atmosphere and keep it constant is pretty difficult when you have outdoor elements like that [flooding] that are fluctuating."

Tamai said the stand has found success in Palo Alto.

"We do well here in Palo Alto because I think the community is very health-con-

scious and they're trying to eat healthy as well as considering local farms and keeping it sustainable," Tamai said. "And they prefer organic or even hydroponic, which to me is like the next step up from organic because we eliminate the need to spray and use pesticides."

Tamai has been selling for Houweling Farms Oxnard for 25 years, but before that, she worked in farmers markets selling products from her family's farm.

Her commitment is affirmed by her commute: Houweling is in Camarillo, 350 miles south of Palo Alto.

"I now reside here, but three weeks ago when we started our season, I drove down and back, waiting to load up. ... It's a 14 or 15-hour day," Tamai said. "I represent two other farms. If I don't do this, you won't see them [the farms]. I have 45 years of going."

### Heirloom Organic Gardens

Dozens of plastic bins overflow with

*The community is very health-conscious and they're trying to eat healthy as well as considering local farms and keeping it sustainable.*

— BEVERLY TAMAI, Houweling Nurseries Oxnard

dark leafy greens at the stall of Heirloom Organic Gardens from Hollister, California. Cashier Steven Devine noted issues with the farm that have resulted from the recent extreme rainfall.

"We had a broken levee, and that affected it, but overall it was kind of a good thing for the greens," Devine said.

Palo Alto resident Mark Ostrau said he is a fan of Heirloom Organic Gardens, and of farmers markets in general.

"Both the quality is better, but more importantly, I'm a big proponent of being able to purchase directly from the farmers," Ostrau said.

Ostrau also noted some changes that he has observed.

"Some vendors come in and some come out," Ostrau said. "And there's been a little more of a growth in the prepared foods side. But otherwise, one nice thing is that it doesn't change a ton, so you sort of know who the vendors are, and you get a sense of who they are and what they do." v



# TRENDING

## SOPHOMORE FINDS FAME IN BRACELET BUSINESS

**K**ATELYN PEGG PRIES OPEN a smooth wooden box to reveal a large colorful assortment of handmade friendship bracelets. As the Palo Alto High School sophomore's friends pick out their favorites to admire, she describes each bracelet in detail. From a weaved depiction of Harry Styles' "Fine Line" album cover to a Totoro-inspired string wallhanging, closer inspection shows the level of attention to detail in each hand-tied knot that can only be achieved by one

who truly loves their craft.

Pegg's videos of threading and knotting friendship bracelets went viral on TikTok in April 2021.

Her account (@braceletsbyk\_) currently has over 300,000 followers and 15 million total likes.

While she now has an active business and wide viewership on social media for her crafts, Pegg said that her interest started from just making friendship bracelets for fun at summer camps as a child. Even after rekindling the interest as a high school student, she was still hesitant to start making videos.

"I never really just decided that I wanted to [pursue content creation], but I made a TikTok while I was on Zoom school," Pegg said. "The first one ended up doing really well, so I just kept going, and it led to something bigger than I thought it would."

Pegg started her bracelet business half a year prior in the summer of 2020 and even without TikTok, she received numerous orders right off the bat. Pegg said she quickly had to develop a system to manage orders as well as the materials needed to supply the creation of each bracelet.

"It was difficult to figure out a website because I started with a Google Form as an order form and it was getting really overwhelming," Pegg said. "It took me a while to research different ways to sell, then I eventually landed on Big Cartel and I've been using it since."

Utilizing Big Cartel, an online selling platform for independent artists and sellers, Pegg's business is mostly a one-person operation.

"Although my mom helps me with the actual business aspect of it, I make everything myself," Pegg said. "If I have any issues, I can always go to her but it's pretty much all on my own."

After almost three years of experience running her business, Pegg said she has started to notice trends in her business' sales. Specifically, she said she noticed that views on her videos and friendship bracelet popularity are directly related to the time of year.

"Usually during the summer season is when business is the best," Pegg said. "More people tend to wear friendship bracelets in the summer and they have more time to be on TikTok which is why my videos do better."

To combat slower sale seasons, Pegg said filming and posting promotional TikTok videos helps sales stay steady all year around.

"Depending on how a video is doing, I will get around five to 10 orders per video," Pegg said. "I like to make sure I have all the



**KNOT TO BE UNDONE** — After picking out a "Strangers Things"-inspired friendship bracelet, Palo Alto High School sophomore Katelyn Pegg ties it around her friend's wrist. "I definitely want to try and keep it [her business] going as long as possible," Pegg said. "I'm thinking of maybe going into some form of business after high school, but I don't have it all figured out yet."



# TOES

bracelets made, because I don't like to make them as orders come in."

However, between managing and crafting orders to filming videos, Pegg said she balances being a teen business owner by making sure not to sacrifice education over business.

"I definitely prioritize school and the business is not too much of a time commitment because I make my own deadlines," Pegg said. "It's just something I do for fun and for myself."

Pegg said she plans to keep the store running for as long as she can, as a business and more importantly, as a hobby.

"Even if it's not going so well in the beginning, you just have to keep going," Pegg said. "One thing I wish I'd known is that sometimes you won't really do well but you just have to keep trying because it can end well."

Not only does TikTok boost sales for Pegg's business, but she said the feedback she receives helps her stay motivated and inspired to keep her business up and running.

"Seeing

a positive response from people is great, and I really enjoy it," Pegg said. "It's fun to see that so many people are enjoying what I'm making and it makes me want to keep continuing it." v

**TYING IT TOGETHER** — Palo Alto High School sophomore Katelyn Pegg explains the process of making her Totoro-inspired wallhanging. "Typically I will buy packs of thread on amazon or from crafts stores for around \$10-15," Pegg said. "Each item is different but it can take me anywhere from 30 minutes to make a smaller bracelet, to five hours to finish a bigger wall hanging."







# ON

## SHARING THE SCRIPTURES OF THE LATTER-DAY SAINTS

**N**O TWO post-secondary plans are the same. Some high school graduates head straight to a four-year university, some opt for trade school or community college and others take a gap year to travel or work — but students like Palo Alto High School senior Allison Dayton are called to embark on religious missions.

Dayton is a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints — a faith colloquially known as Mormonism — and she plans on serving an 18-month mission after her first year of college.

The Church of Jesus Christ defines a mission as a “period of volunteer service... when Church members devote themselves part-time or full-time to proselytizing, humanitarian assistance or other service.”

Missions are generally 18 months long for women and 24 months for men, and are spent serving at one of the Church’s hundreds of locations across the world. According to the Church, 36,639 members embarked on a mission in 2021.

Men and women are allowed to start their missions at ages 18 and 19, respectively, meaning members often spend a year at college before departing.

Though this may disrupt what many perceive as the “normal” four year college path, schools with large Latter-day Saint populations like Brigham Young University offer a flexible calendar with courses throughout the year to accommodate stu-

Art by ADDY CAMERON

# A MISSION

dent missionaries. Ambitious students may even get ahead before they depart, like Dayton hopes to; she said she is planning on earning her associates degree through community college courses before she graduates high school.

Missionaries are assigned their destination by the Church, and spend 3-9 weeks in training centers before they depart, sometimes learning a new language native to their location. Many of the lessons include Bible and scripture reading sessions to further missionaries' knowledge of their religion.

While some may assume that students going on missions are swayed by pressures from their family and community, Paly senior and church member Sawyer Mickelson described it differently.

"It's more like 'This movie was so good, you have to see it,'" Mickelson said. "That's the type of pressure you feel. Everyone who's gone on missions is like, 'You have to go, because it's gonna be so amazing.'" Many members view the trip as a period of life to immerse themselves in their faith.

"[On a mission] you get to learn so much about your religion, which makes up a pretty big part of your identity, especially if you grow up in the church or are a convert," Dayton said. "It's just a totally life changing experience."

Evangelism is also a keystone of missionary work, as the doctrine of Latter-day Saints calls them to share their beliefs with others.

"We believe you've been given a lot of blessings by God, so you give these two years of your life sort of in a sacrifice back to God," Mickelson said. "It [a mission] is for sharing the gospel. We believe that the gospel is really good for people, and so

spreading it is helping a lot of people."

However, the decision to sacrifice this time is not always easy, and the process can require significant deliberation.

"I kind of didn't want to go on a mission," said Julia Jacobsen, a Palo Alto resident and Latter-day Saint. "I was 21, the age girls could go [at the time] ... and I felt a pull to go, but I sort of didn't know if I wanted to do it. So I prayed and I was reading the Scriptures, and a verse popped

out at me. And I was like 'Oh, I'm supposed to go on a mission.'"

After reaching her decision, Jacobsen spent 18 months in

Finland. 30 years later, she is still in touch with the people she met while serving.

"You feel a lot of love for the people wherever you're serving a mission, because you do a lot of service and you're in people's homes, giving them messages that are important to you and hopefully to them, and you feel a lot of desire for them to have happy lives," Jacobsen said. "So you do build a community."

Missionaries' everyday activities and goals vary depending on their location. According to Jacobsen, a typical day is spent volunteering in local communities or visiting homes and public areas to spread the word about the beliefs of Latter-day Saints.

"France is more of a secular country, so there's not as many people consistently interested in hearing from you," said Nicole Jacobsen, Julia Jacobsen's daughter and a Gunn High School graduate who served

a mission in France. "[I spent] a lot more time walking around trying to meet people... whereas my sister who was in Washington state spent a lot more time teaching people who were already interested in the church. It's a balance of local needs, and every day is a little bit different."

According to Julia Jacobsen, the self-structured design of missions leaves participants with many valuable skills.

"My whole life was much more disciplined after my mission, and I performed better in college than I had previously," Jacobsen said. "I wasn't expecting to gain better work ethic and discipline."

Missions can also provide unique leadership opportunities that young adults would not find in university.

"I had 200 missionaries that I was responsible for [on my mission]," Palo Alto Bishop Rodney Dial said. "[On a mission], you learn how to lead at an age when most of your peers are at the bottom of the totem pole in their internships."

Dial's mission took place in New York, between his freshman and sophomore year at Brigham Young University. He said that the leadership skills he gained from his mission

have been very helpful throughout his career; after his trip, he earned a bachelor's degree in Economics at Brigham Young University, and an MBA at Stanford Graduate School of Business.

Dial currently serves as chief executive officer of his startup, Legacy Lending, in addition to his work as a Bishop, which is entirely volunteer.

"You go on a mission with a kind of belief, or as we call it, faith," Dial said. "You hope it's true, you believe it's true. Now you're going to go and put it to the test as a missionary yourself." v

***"You get to learn so much about your religion... It's just a totally life changing experience."***

— ALLISON DAYTON, church member

***"[Missions are] a balance of local needs, and every day is a little bit different."***

— NICOLE JACOBSEN, church member



# BORN INTO BREAD

## "NEPO BABIES" PARALLEL LEGACY STUDENTS

**H**OW HARD IS IT TO MAKE IT in Hollywood? Social media will have you thinking it's easy — but only if your parents have their own stars on the Walk of Fame.

The term "nepo baby," short for "nepotism baby," refers to a person who has parents who are either famous in their own right, or are industry insiders with connections to give their children a leg up in their careers.

This concept has recently been at the center of social media discussions, but nepotism in the entertainment industry is nothing new.

Many of the top models, actors, singers and other celebrities come from famous and influential families — Bella and Gigi Hadid, Hailey Bieber and the Kardashian-Jenners are some of the most well-known examples, all of whom have been accused of boosting their fame through familial connections.

"I doubt Kendall Jenner would be one of the world's top models if she weren't part of the very famous Kardashian-Jenner family," Palo Alto High School sophomore Hannah Abrams said. "Having connections and access to resources benefits any individual. I believe that a portion of a nepotism baby's success can always be attributed to their inherited wealth and fame, which makes me feel like they are less deserving of their success."

The nepotism debate in Hollywood is relevant in Palo Alto due to the prevalence of legacy students, as well as students who have benefitted from their parents' jobs or statuses.

According to an anonymous opt-in survey of 175 Paly students, 47.7% of respondents reported that their family's careers or statuses have given them an advantage when looking for jobs or internships.

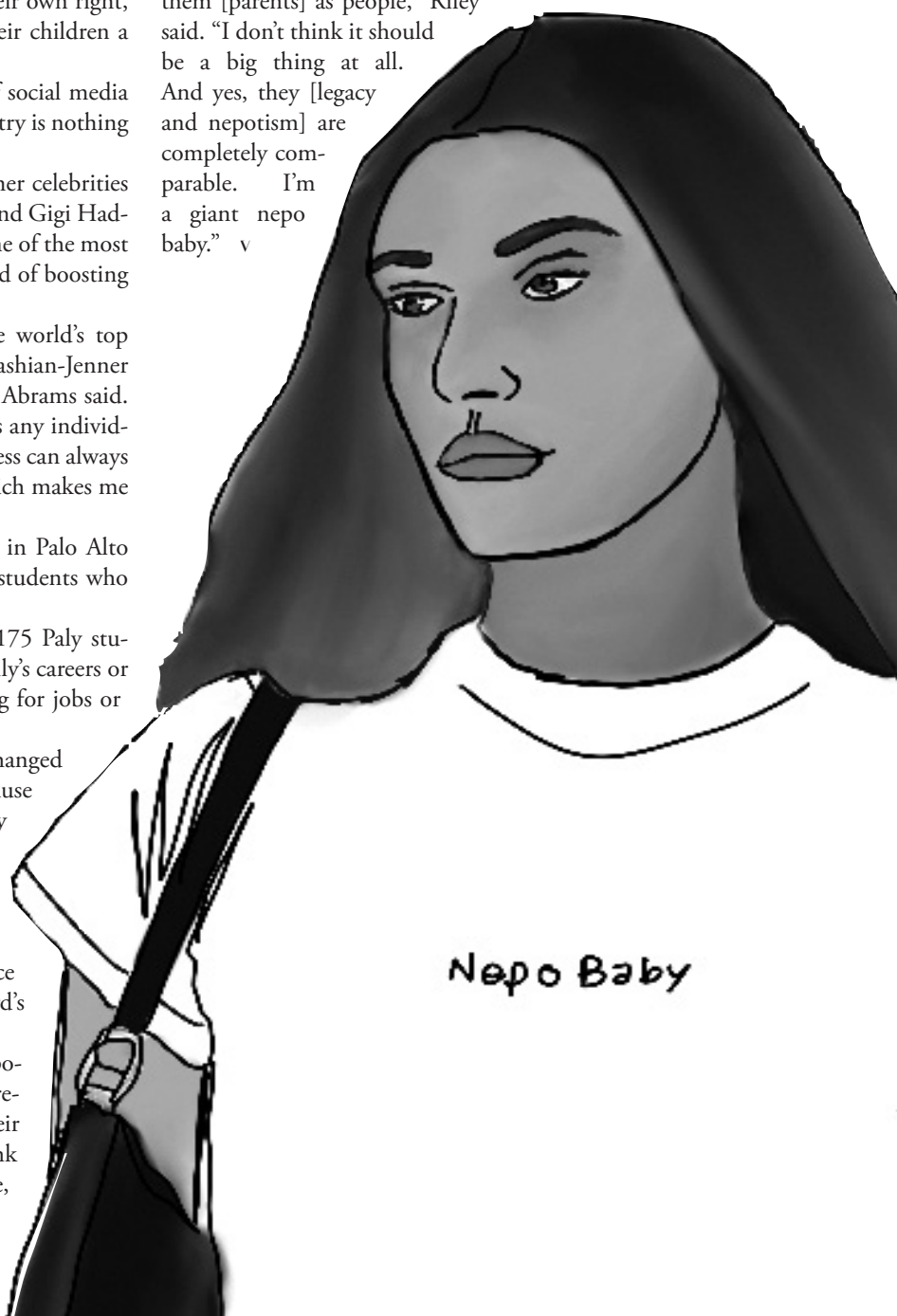
Isabella, a sophomore whose name has been changed to protect her privacy, has legacy at Stanford because her mom attended the university. She said that legacy shouldn't be a factor in college admissions, despite the fact that Stanford heavily values legacy.

For Stanford's undergraduate Class of 2023, the acceptance rate for legacy students and children of donors was 16.2% while their overall acceptance rate was only 4.34%, according to data from Stanford's 2020 annual admissions report.

"Being a legacy is definitely comparable to nepotism," Isabella said. "Letting someone into a school, regardless of their own achievements, as a reward to their family seems really unfair and incredibly biased. I think people should get into colleges based on who they are, not who their parents are."

Sophomore Riley, whose name has been changed to protect their privacy, is a legacy of Harvard University and the University of Rochester, and shares Isabella's perspective that legacy students should not be given an advantage.

"I think it [legacy] can be looked at as an insight into more of them [parents] as people," Riley said. "I don't think it should be a big thing at all. And yes, they [legacy and nepotism] are completely comparable. I'm a giant nepo baby." v



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Text by LIA CARDWELL and ANDREW XUE

# DRAWING

## YE'S RECENT REMARKS PROMPT QUESTION OF

**H**EARTFELT, ELECTRONIC dance beats. Eighty's-style synthesizer hooks. Explosive, speaker-breaking sounds that turned into a generation of melodic, introspective rap music. This is Ye, previously named Kanye West, arguably one of the most influential musicians of our century. With 24 Grammy awards, the producer, rapper and fashion designer's music knows no limits, spanning from indie-rock to electro to gospel. Yet, after a slew of recent antisemitic

remarks, Ye's actions pose a moral dilemma — should we continue to indulge in the work of controversial figures?

Ye has always been vocal about his opinions on world events. In 2005, during a live telethon to raise money for Hurricane Katrina relief, Ye, who believed relief efforts were being mismanaged in predominantly poor neighborhoods, said that "George Bush doesn't care about Black people." In 2009, Ye famously interrupted Taylor Swift's acceptance speech for Best Female Video at MTV's Music Awards, citing his belief

that Beyonce should have won. And most recently, in early October of 2022, he tweeted about "going death con 3 on JEWISH PEOPLE," later posting a picture of a swastika inside the Star of David.

The tweet went viral, not only alarming millions of his fans and the general public, but also the businesses working with his brand. As a result, he was banned from social media platforms such as Twitter and Instagram and lost his billionaire status, as brands including Gap, Adidas and Balenciaga terminated their contracts with him. Ye later

appeared on the talk show "Piers Morgan Uncensored" where he made it clear that he was "absolutely not" sorry for the statements he made.

But despite Ye's highly publicized usage of hate speech, much of his fan base remains loyal, prompting the question: is the creative pioneer behind each of his masterpiece albums the same Ye that was recently making antisemitic threats on social media?

### Pro-ye or con-ye?

For Palo Alto High School senior Avi Srinivasan, Ye's music has been more than just an addition to his playlist — it has been a part of his life since the beginning of his childhood.

"I have been listening since I was six years old," Srinivasan said. "He's one of the most successful music artists of all time and the impact that he's had just from the past is something that I appreciate very personally given that I've grown up listening to him and it sucks to see him right now."

Despite Srinivasan's appreciation for Ye's music, he said he drew the line in supporting Ye's behavior.

"The music he made was so well crafted and he produced it in an amazing way where you have to respect that in a sort of sense," Srinivasan said. "But because I don't really have a personal connection with that artist, it [Ye's words] doesn't affect me in the same way as it could affect people."

Srinivasan said he has learned to appreciate Ye's music, and other artists' music, without going in-depth into its context. He believes that merely streaming his music is different from condoning his behavior.

"If you're doing something that is going to promote them and get them on



# THE LINE

## WHETHER TO SEPARATE ART FROM ARTISTS

a bigger platform to post outlandish or bad things, then maybe you shouldn't listen to [their] music," Srinivasan said. "If you really just want to enjoy it, just take it for what it is and look at it at a very surface level, which I think is what the majority of people do."

While Srinivasan can get the most out of listening to someone without having to like or respect them, other students feel that an artist's art is intertwined with their identity, and in this case, Kanye's antisemitic remarks are inseparable from his musical self.

"Especially in music, I feel like your opinions and your life experiences are reflected a lot in your work more so than in other forms of art," senior Dalia Antebi said. "Art is inextricable from the artist, but listening to music or appreciating art for what it is isn't necessarily condoning the artist's actions."

Antebi, who is culturally Jewish, admits that Ye's words have altered her perception of him as an artist and his music, but she isn't necessarily against others who listen to him.

"I'm going to have a problem with people who are more likely to have an aligned view with the things that he [Ye] is saying and the messages that he's personally spreading," Antebi said. "Because, if you're closer to the artist, then you can be more easily influenced by his words and his actions."

said there is more to Ye's actions than being simply "good" or "bad."

"You need to investigate and contextualize all of their work," Najar said. "It's not just as simple as they are bad people because they did this. It's too easy to do

that. However, because Kanye is in front of us and actively saying these things, it makes it easier in some ways to make those kinds of decisions."

Najar adds that the on-going criticism combined

— DALIA ANTEBI, senior

with Ye's diagnosed bi-polar disorder makes it extremely difficult to resolve Ye's controversy.

"No one wants to have a deep conversation about wanting him to be better, hoping he gets the help he needs and also realizing it's not totally our place to judge," Najar said. "There's no perfect solution to any of this."

While having mental

health issues does not necessarily excuse Ye of his offensive remarks, Najar acknowledges the complexity behind not just his music, but also his opinions — as a musician himself, Najar wants the best for Ye.

"Let's hope for the best," Najar said. "If you believe in prayer, if you believe in good vibes, let's send those things out. Let's see if we can uncover the person that he [Ye] had promised to be and the person that he could become." v

*Especially in music, I feel like your opinions and your life experiences are reflected a lot in your work more so than in other forms of art."*

More than meets the eye

Paly music teacher Michael Najar

Bound 2



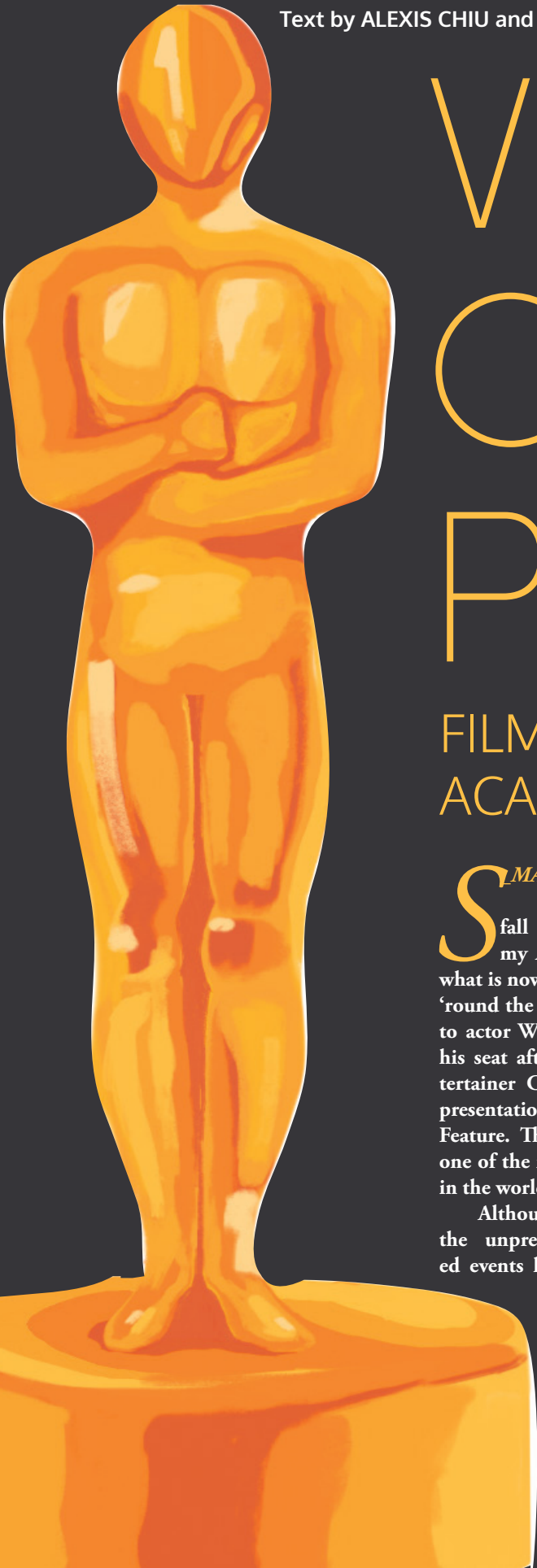


Text by ALEXIS CHIU and ALLEGRA WEST

Art by MADELYN CASTRO

# VERDE OSCAR PICKS

## FILMS DESERVING OF AN ACADEMY AWARD



**S**<sup>L</sup>**MACK!** Eyes ogle and mouths fall agape at the 94th Academy Awards as viewers process what is now known as “the slap heard ‘round the world.” All attention goes to actor Will Smith as he returns to his seat after his vicious slap to entertainer Chris Rock during Rock’s presentation for Best Documentary Feature. The 10-second clip became one of the most viewed online videos in the world.

Although it may be hard to top the unprecedented and unexpected events like “slapgate,” this year’s award show may have another controversy in store. The Oscars have

historically been a white-dominated award ceremony, but the majority Asian film “Everything Everywhere All At Once” is in the lead with 11 nominations.

“It [‘Everything Everywhere All At Once’] has diversity, it’s fantastic, but just being a great movie is what really matters,” Palo Alto High School Film Club president Bennett Hardy said. “It is fantastic and people seeing that it’s a great movie with a fully Asian cast shows that there’s real change happening in Hollywood for sure.”

With the 95th Academy Awards to take place on March 12, these are some of the 2022 films that Verde believes deserve an Oscar. v

### Best Visual Effects: "Avatar: the Way of Water"

Thirteen years after the original "Avatar" was released, audiences returned to the mystical land of Pandora in December. After its release in 2009, fans on online forums described something they later dubbed "post-Avatar depression" to describe the gloom following the realization that the beautifully realistic world and care-free lifestyle of Pandora doesn't exist, according to *Variety*. The sequel was highly anticipated for what landscapes director James Cameron would bring to the silver screen.

The unique lush floating landscapes, glowing plants and animals returned in another installment of Jake Sully's fight to protect the Na'vi — blue humanoid — people, their culture and land. The signature glowing plants and creative animals are joined by new visuals of the underwater world — never-seen-before fish, animals and coral. The film was a visual effects masterpiece as 70-75% of it was computer generated, according to BBC Culture.

In "Avatar: the Way of Water," the adventure continues largely underwater with visual effects done by Joe Letteri, Richard Baneham, Eric Saindon and Daniel Barrett. One reason why production took so long to complete was because technology had to be developed to track and generate computer images underwater — according to BBC Culture — the actors were filmed underwater in suits with sensors and markers so their performance could be translated into the computer generated images.

Because of this film's breathtaking visual effects work, it earns Verde's pick for Best Visual Effects. Throughout the film, the viewers genuinely feel as if they are transported to a different planet.

### Best Actress in a Leading Role: Michelle Yeoh, "Everything Everywhere All At Once"

Michelle Yeoh's outstanding performance brought nuance and complexity to the experiences and struggles of Asian Americans in America and the challenges of motherhood. Acting alongside Stephanie Hsu, who plays her daughter, the two quarrel in a painfully real manner capable of bringing tears to mothers and daughters everywhere.

Her dazzling, yet raw, performance set her apart and made her Verde's pick for Best Actress in a Leading Role.

### Best Picture: "Everything Everywhere All At Once"

Michelle Yeoh stars as Evelyn Wang, an overworked woman running a failing laundromat with her husband Waymond (Ke Huy Quan). In the midst of a heated debate with IRS auditor Deirdre Beaubeirdre (Jamie Lee Curtis), Evelyn discovers the power of the multiverse and the battles that come along with it.

"Everything Everywhere All At Once" explores topics such as queerness in the Asian American community, the tensions of adolescence with immigrant parents, guilt, regret and the infinite possibilities of the future.

The risks taken by "Everything Everywhere All At Once" in both its casting and concept made it Verde's pick for Best Picture. The film brings together the action of a big budget superhero movie with commentary on the meaning of family and gratitude, all with a predominantly Asian American cast.

"It's a very well made film and it definitely deserves all the hype and also it was very cheap to make, so it's pretty awesome to see a movie that's independent make the awards," Hardy said.





# Love is in the air

## EXPLORING FAVORITE ROM-COMS ON CAMPUS

**FEBRUARY UNDENIABLY MARKS** the month of love. A staple of the month's romantic holiday, Valentine's Day, is watching romantic comedies — or “rom-coms” — movies that typically entail two people meeting, being separated in one way or another and ultimately finding their way back to each other to profess their love. Rom-coms are full of comedic and lighthearted moments that make them the perfect films to watch

when feeling in the hopeless romantic mood or when in need of a pick-me-up. They provide a way for us to celebrate and teach values of love while not taking ourselves too seriously.

In recognition of Valentine's Day, we surveyed 175 Palo Alto High School students about their favorite rom-coms and narrowed the results down to three iconic movies.

Here is what we found. v



### “When Harry Met Sally” (1989)

After sharing an excruciating 12-hour drive from Chicago to New York, mutual friends Harry Burns (Billy Crystal) and Sally Albright (Meg Ryan) plan to never see each other again. Ten years later however, they run into each other in a bookstore — and their paths keep crossing — until they eventually realize that their love is worth pursuing. This charming rom-com will forever be a classic and a crowd favorite, from an unlikely friendship to a beautiful romance. The plot of “When Harry Met Sally” makes it the ultimate rom-com.

Although rom-coms are often known for their somewhat unrealistic characters and storylines, senior Ella Rosenblum said she is drawn to the film because of its authenticity.

“I feel like the way that it [‘When Harry Met Sally’] is written is very much how real people talk,” Rosenblum said. “A lot of the time with rom-coms, you get this sort of dialogue that is really dramatic and fun, but it doesn’t feel like you’re watching real people.”

She also said she likes film’s visuals.

“I’m not gonna lie, a big draw of it is the visuals,” Rosenblum said. “Meg Ryan wears some killer outfits.”

Sophomore Niaz Alasti said she is also drawn in by the artistic choices.

“It’s just such a beautiful movie... the cinematography is really pretty too,” Alasti said.

### **"10 Things I Hate About You" (1999)**

When Walter Stratford bans his daughter Bianca (Larisa Oleynik) from dating until her independent, boy-hating older sister Kat (Julia Stiles) gets a boyfriend, Bianca sets out to find her sister a match. In the meantime, Joey Donner (Andrew Keegan), the boy Bianca has been pining for, pays the rebellious loner Patrick Verona (Heath Ledger) to take Kat out. Initially, Kat tries to keep her distance from Patrick, but eventually he wins her over.

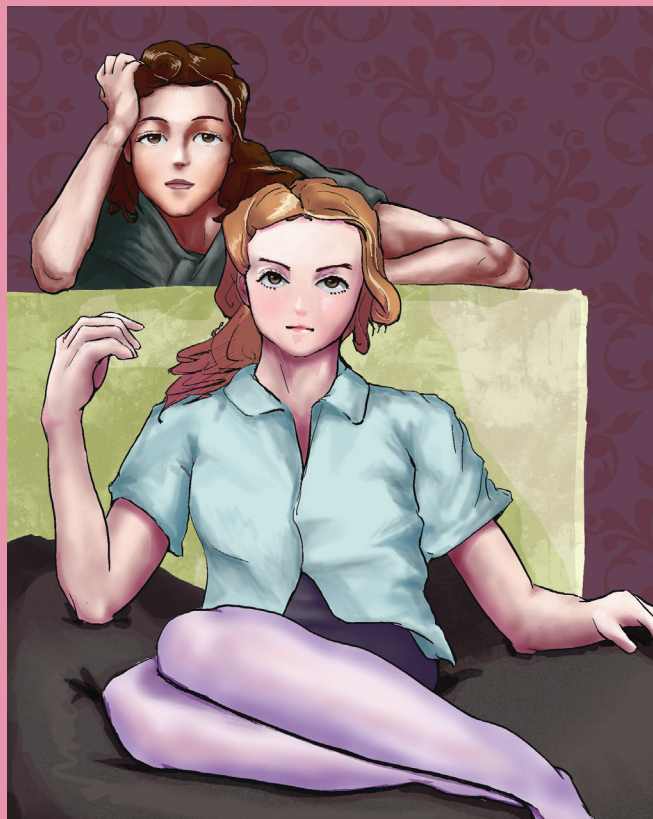
This iconic '90s rom-com and modern day take of William Shakespeare's "The Taming of the Shrew," is a Paly favorite with teen angst, a love triangle and an adorable romance.

Junior Roxanna Reid said she enjoys the movie because of the vintage fashion and strong feminist messaging.

"It ['10 Things I Hate About You'] is a big comfort movie for me and I love the '90s style that the costumes and soundtrack create," Reid said. "The movie has a lot of attempts to incorporate feminist themes, some scenes more successfully than others, and even if their characters don't always feel developed, I love the dynamic between the heroines Kat and Bianca."

Sophomore Aria Shah said she likes the lighthearted nature of the movie.

"'10 Things I Hate About You' is probably my favorite movie of all time," Shah said. "I just really like how unserious it is and how it's just your classic rom-com with how predictable it is."



### **"13 Going on 30" (2004)**

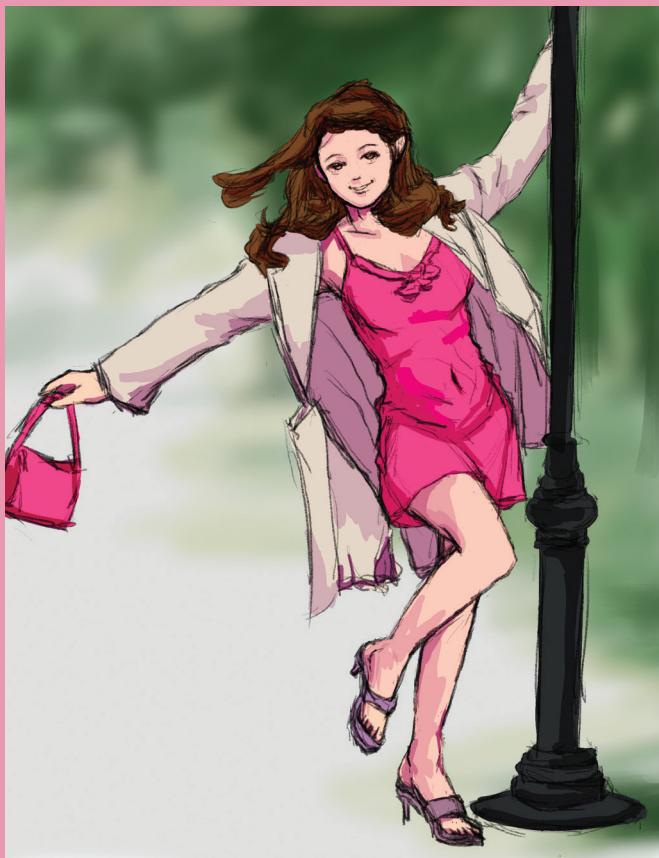
All 13-year-old Jenna Rink (Christa B. Allen) wants is to be "30, flirty and thriving." For her birthday, her best friend Matt "Matty" Flamhaff (Mark Ruffalo) gives her a dollhouse covered with "magic wishing dust," which falls on her and transports her 17 years into the future — she wakes up as her 30-year-old self (Jennifer Garner) the next morning. Unfortunately for Jenna, being 30 is not everything she dreamed it would be. Luckily she reconnects with Matt, who helps her realize what — and who — is most important in her life. The movie follows Jenna as she navigates the ups and downs of adulthood and tries to make amends for past mistakes.

The film was well-received for its charm, humor and emotional depth, and has since become an all-time classic rom-com. Sophomore Sophie Williams said she likes the aesthetics of the visuals, as well as the message behind the movie.

"I love the little '80s and 'Y2K' moments and I also love that she decided to change herself and she goes for what she believes and not what she wants out of life," Williams said.

Senior Jasmine Tabrizi said that while her appreciation for the film has evolved over time since she first watched it at age 10, it remains one of her favorites.

"I remember thinking when I was younger that it would be so cool to jump forward in time just like the movie's main character did," Tabrizi said. "But now that I'm older I feel like I view the story differently and it's shown me how important it is to appreciate life as it comes and focus on the present."





## A FOCUS ON

# FILM



## MEMORIES CAPTURED IN PHOTOS

Although digital cameras are becoming increasingly advanced and accessible, some still prefer film cameras like these.

For Paly photography teacher Kenna Gallagher, film photos convey emotions that digital cameras cannot.

“There’s a specific grit and rawness that you can see [in film photos],” Gallagher said. “It just has a different feeling.”

Unlike smartphones that can take and store thousands of photos, film rolls limit the number of photos then require them to be carefully developed.

“Film is intentional,” Gallagher said. “You have to get your chemistry perfect in order to get a good exposure, in order to

print it well. It takes a little more thought and focus to hone your craft.”

Because photographers must pay special attention when taking film photos, Gallagher values the sense of time, effort and energy felt in film photos.

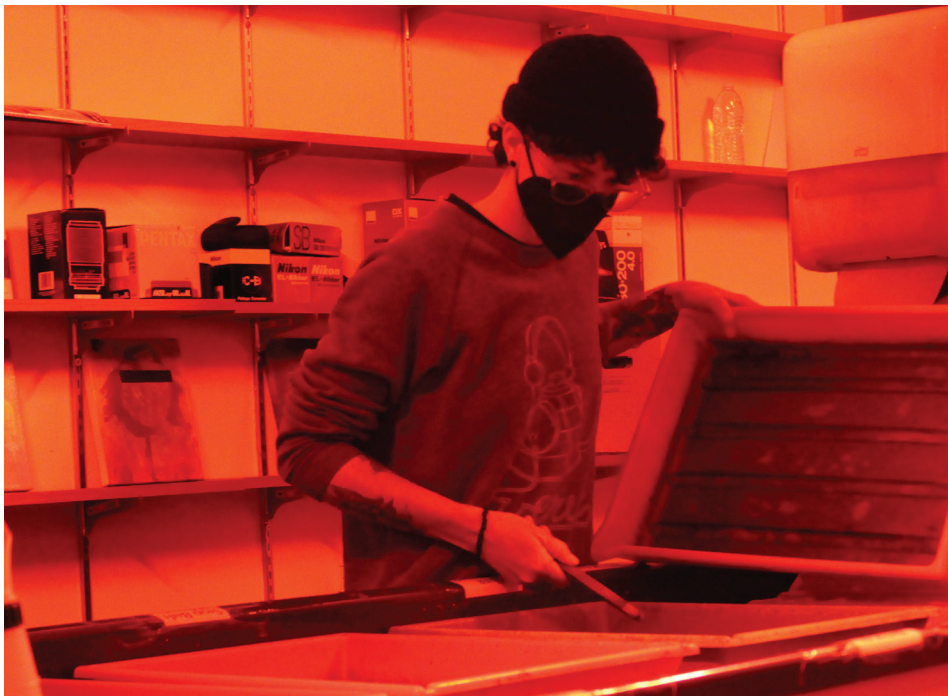
Verde asked some student film photographers why they enjoy film photography and the backstory behind some of their favorite photos. ▽

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**RED IN DARKROOM (MIDDLE TOP)** — Palo Alto High School photography teacher Kenna Gallagher flips through films. Film photos are developed in rooms lit with red lights. “I don’t feel like there’s this much permanence [in digital photos],” Gallagher said. “You can’t hold it. You can’t feel it.” Photo: Austin Eng

“**DARKROOM IN USE.**” This sign flicks on as piercing red lights fill Palo Alto High School’s dark room. This red light prevents exposure to other lights, which could affect the resulting photos. Vaguely smelling of chemicals, one wall of the room is lined with film cameras, each of which has taken dozens of film photos.





#### LOWELL KURTZ (FAR LEFT)

Senior Lowell Kurtz said he likes film for many of the same reasons as Gallagher — the sense of purpose and deeper emotion it carries.

"A roll of film is limited, so each shot is worth more, which means I have to be meticulous with how I frame a shot," Kurtz said. "I like to focus on materials and textures."

When Kurtz captured the photo above during a photography day trip with his friend Liam, he said he decided to snap a shot because of the different visual elements in the frame.

"When he stood up to take a photo, I liked the silhouette that was made with the sky behind Liam, and the shade covering his body," Kurtz said. Photo: Lowell Kurtz

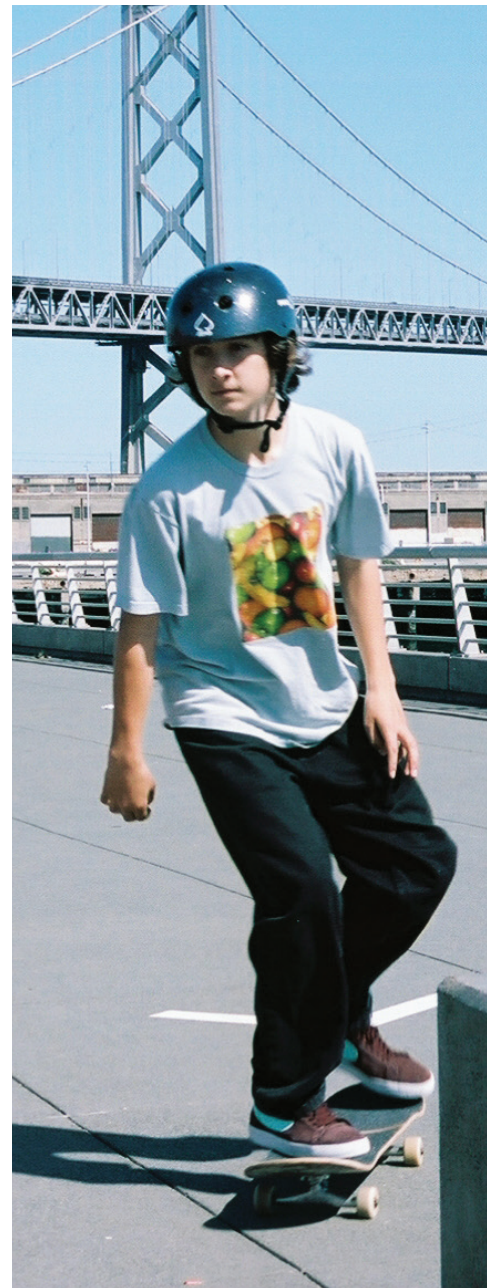
#### LYDIA MITZ (BOTTOM MIDDLE)

For sophomore Lydia Mitz, film photography was a popular trend on social media that she wanted to hop onto.

"I got into [film] photography because I saw a lot of people taking film photos on Instagram," she said. "I thought they looked super cool and would be nice to put up in my room."

Now, however, Mitz is motivated by how film photos enable her to capture some of her favorite memories to look back on when she is older.

"These were taken on backpacking trips which were both super fun," Mitz said. "I love bringing film on trips because I can look back at these film photos and remember exactly what I was doing and where I was." Photo: Lydia Mitz



#### ZEKE MORRISON (RIGHT)

Another appealing aspect of film photography is the mystery of how the photos will turn out, according to junior Zeke Morrison, who enjoys capturing action shots.

"You click the shutter, and you don't know what's going to happen," Morrison said. "You might even forget about the day. And then when you see these photos two weeks later, you just think, 'Oh, that was a really fun memory.'"

Sometimes, Morrison said he fails to get the correct lighting for his photos, and the photos turn out completely black or white or only capture a strip of light.

"It's a surprise," Morrison said. "You never know what the photos are gonna look like until the end." Photo: Zeke Morrison



# GETTING TO YOUR GATE 101

## A LAZY TEEN'S GUIDE TO AIRPORT FAILS, FEARS AND FOLLIES

**I**T WAS AIRPORT RUSH HOUR. Long lines snaked across gates and hallways as tourists and staff desperately squeezed themselves between clusters of commuters and baggage, everyone simultaneously rushing to get to their different destinations.

In other words, it was an introverted traveler's nightmare, and one to which I was already well-accustomed.

As someone who flies almost once a month and often alone,

I've had my fair share of hilarious and awkward experiences while trying to navigate the airport.

But from those moments, I've also learned some tips and tricks to avoid any (more) mishaps and ensure a smooth flying experience.

So, if you're new to flying, or simply want to read about my most embarrassing airport moments, here are eight of my top pieces of advice to help you safely reach your gate and beyond. v

### No. 1: Udon

With my own past trauma in mind, here's my first piece of advice: Don't end up like me who miscalculated her time and got distracted stuffing her face with udon a few minutes before her flight took off.

For the sake of your own peace of mind, don't have something important planned immediately before or after your flight arrives. Post-flight plans are a recipe for anxiety. Flight times aren't always set in stone; delays are common, and gate changes aren't rare either.

Give yourself some wiggle room. Please.

### No. 2: Something to do

Don't head to an airport thinking "I'll just sleep on the flight." You never know if a screaming baby or a talkative neighbor will be seated near you.

Always be prepared with a movie or book downloaded onto a personal device, or at least some headphones to either listen to downloaded music or plug into the airplane's seat monitors. If you aren't a fan of those, try some offline video games, drawing apps, sketchbooks, or even work (or in my case, long overdue homework).

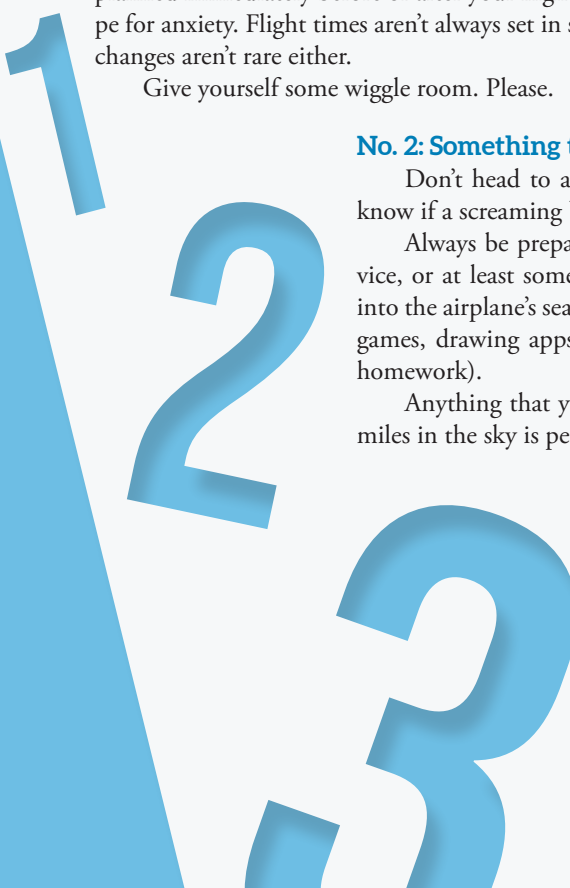
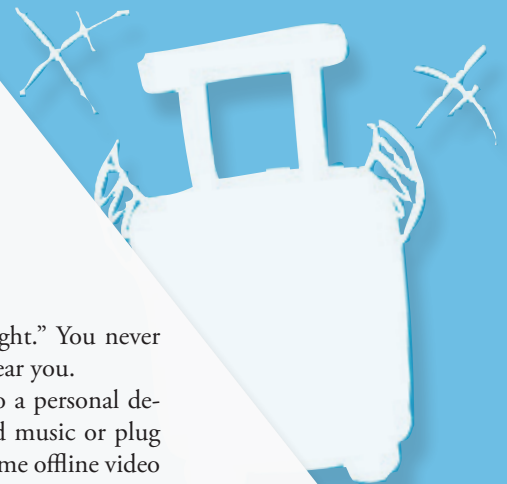
Anything that you can enjoy while sitting in a cramped seat a few hundred miles in the sky is perfect. Oh, and don't forget to use the toilet before you leave.

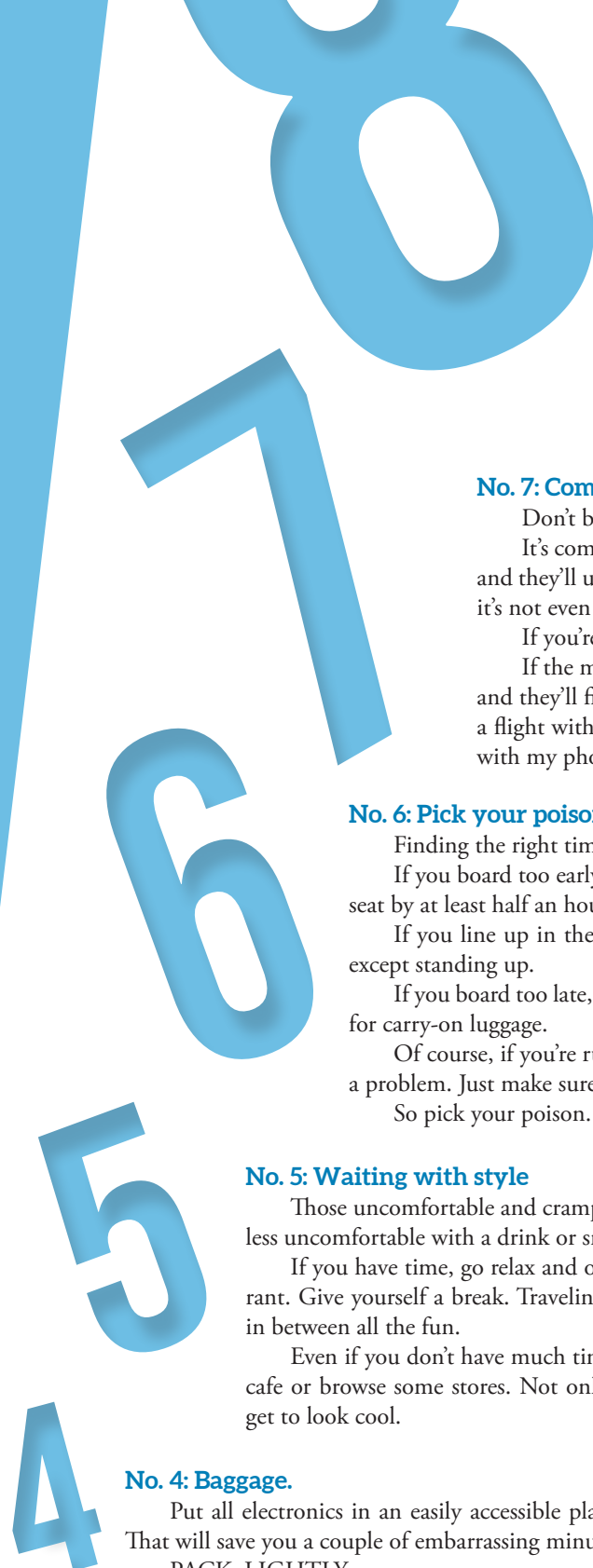
### No. 3: Legroom

Know your plane. Know your flight. And, hopefully, know your destination.

It's important to know at least the bare minimum about the giant metal machine that you'll be trusting your life with for the next couple of hours. How big it is, how many seats are in one row and where the nearest bathroom is in case you forgot to follow the last part of tip no. two.

Seats located in and behind the emergency exit row usually have extra legroom (a few precious inches of paradise). Try to choose seats in those rows. Being able to fully extend your legs on a flight will save you from experiencing hours of endless suffering and an aching lower body.





#### **No. 4: Baggage.**

Put all electronics in an easily accessible place in your bag or backpack. That will save you a couple of embarrassing minutes at security.

**PACK. LIGHTLY.**

For short weekend trips, I only bring the bare necessities that all fit in my backpack. One or two outfits, my devices and chargers, toiletries and money. There's nothing more frustrating than having to lug around heavy bags through a seemingly endless airport. They're tiresome to drag, take up one or two of your hands and make it harder to find a decent seat in an airport restaurant or cafe. They also make it that much harder to use the bathroom.

Just limit yourself to one backpack.

#### **No. 5: Waiting with style**

Those uncomfortable and cramped seats at your gate would be somewhat less uncomfortable with a drink or snack in front of you.

If you have time, go relax and order yourself something small at a restaurant. Give yourself a break. Traveling can be tiring, and it's important to rest in between all the fun.

Even if you don't have much time, at least buy yourself a drink at a small cafe or browse some stores. Not only is it quick and enjoyable, but you also get to look cool.

#### **No. 6: Pick your poison**

Finding the right time to board is complicated.

If you board too early, you'll be extending your torture time in a cramped seat by at least half an hour.

If you line up in the middle, you'll also be extending your torture time, except standing up.

If you board too late, you'll be having a rough time finding overhead space for carry-on luggage.

Of course, if you're running late, finding the right time to board is hardly a problem. Just make sure you do end up boarding your flight in the end.

So pick your poison. I can't offer much help with this one.

#### **No. 7: Communication is key**

Don't be afraid to ask when you need something.

It's common to switch seats with others, so don't feel bad about it. Just ask and they'll usually agree. If you're like me and fly alone with no one to sit with, it's not even a problem you need to consider.

If you're thirsty, ask for water. If you're hungry, ask for food.

If the monitor in front of you isn't working, then tell the flight attendants and they'll figure something out. Don't be like me and end up sitting through a flight with a broken screen and a useless charging pod. My heart died along with my phone on that flight.

#### **No. 8: Don't panic**

Traveling is often unpredictable and won't go as planned. Never panic; it doesn't help. The best way to solve your problems is to think clearly and act sensibly. The airport staff exists to help you if you're ever lost or have questions.

If you're stuck in a security line and your boarding flight is near, maybe some nice people will let you ahead of them.

If you lose your grip on your cat as you're walking through the security checkpoint (I speak from personal experience), then you won't even have to ask and you'll get help.

If your flight is canceled long after you've dropped off your luggage, it'll probably be right where you expect it — at your destination.

How to get to your destination? Well, that part is for you to figure out.





# CANVAS

# CONUNDRUM

ART PROFESSOR'S BRUSH WITH CONTROVERSY

Text by **NADAV STERNHEIM**

Art by **ALEX YAN**

**H** EADLINES LIKE, “A lecturer showed a painting of the Prophet Muhammad. She lost her job” are beginning to shock me less and less.

On Jan. 8, the New York Times published an article with that title describing an incident that occurred at Hamline University, a small private school in Saint Paul, Minnesota.

Professor Erika López Prater, an adjunct professor teaching global art history, showed her class a 14th-century painting that depicted the Prophet Muhammad. Prater knew that many Muslims prohibit themselves from seeing depictions of Muhammad, so she gave her class multiple warnings — both written in the course syllabus and verbally a few minutes prior to the displaying of the painting. Senior Aram Wedatalla stayed in the class despite the warnings, saw the painting and complained to administration, saying that showing the painting was an attack on the Muslim religion. Prater was fired.

When I first read the article, my initial reaction was confusion. Why did the student stay in the class after hearing the warnings? Why didn’t the administration hear out Prater’s side of the story? Even if Prater didn’t give any warnings, would that still have warranted firing her?

The more I thought about it, though, I realized that this is the direction our world is heading: where one student’s feelings matter more than the education of everybody else. As a senior planning on attending college next year, this culture of sensitivity and emotionalism worries me. The fact that a student can voluntarily take a class that covers religious art history, choose to stay in the classroom despite knowing that a painting they prohibit themselves from seeing would be shown, and still be supported by the university’s administration over Prater — who took every realistic measure to prevent this from happening — is a marker of where education in the modern world is heading. How can students receive the best possible education when it is being compromised in fear of one student feeling offended?

***The more I thought about it, though, I realized that this is the direction our world is heading.***

Palo Alto High School AP Art History teacher Susan La Fetra has a different view on the Hamline incident. As a teacher, La Fetra said, it is important to create a safe learning environment for students.

“Do you know how much art there is in the entire world?” La Fetra said. “Why would she [Prater] pick that particular thing to spend the precious time she has with her students? It does not make sense. It is not doing her job.”

According to the New York Times article, however, the painting, from 14th century Muslim Rashid-al-Din’s “A Compendium of Chronicles,” is commonly shown in art history classes. The article also listed other art history professors, including Christine Gruber from the University of Michigan and Omid Safi from Duke University, who expressed the idea that showing art of this kind is important. In fact, Gruber went so far as to say that not covering the piece while studying Islamic art “would be like not teaching Michaelangelo’s ‘David.’”

In addition to the idea that Prater could have shown a different painting that did not contain a depiction of Muhammad, La Fetra pointed out that it is important for teachers to create a comfortable environment for their students.

“I understand that she [Prater] said she warned students that she was going to show images of leaders of major religions,” La Fetra said. “If I warned you that I’m going to scream obscenities in your face, it

still doesn’t make it okay when I start doing that.”

But there’s a massive difference between screaming obscenities in someone’s face and showing what is arguably an incredibly important piece of religious art history in an academic setting. The point of screaming obscenities is strictly to offend and insult, whereas the intention of displaying the painting was for students to study, scrutinize and learn. While they must be handled with tact, controversial and difficult topics like slavery or the Holocaust are some of the most academically valuable and should not be shied away from.

According to Inside Higher Ed, professors all over the country are resigning from long-held positions. This school year, teacher shortages have been reported in 47 states, according to the Department of Education. CNN says that the shortages could be a result of “low pay, high student-to-teacher ratios, poor working conditions, post-pandemic learning loss, school shootings and

social or emotional issues with students, [and] teachers across the nation are also grappling with culture wars over what they can and cannot teach in the classroom.”

But teaching has never been a glamorous job. It is my belief that the last issue — increasing censorship in the classroom and sensitivity to certain academic subjects — is a main cause of these shortages. If we want classrooms to be a place where new ideas are introduced and grappled with, we need to create an environment where teachers feel comfortable exposing their students to potentially uncomfortable topics.

Once that happens, maybe headlines designed to be surprising will actually surprise me again. v

***How can students receive the best possible education when it is being compromised in fear of one student feeling offended?***

***If we want classrooms to be a place that new ideas are introduced and grappled with, we need to create an environment where teachers feel comfortable exposing their students to potentially uncomfortable topics.***



Text by **ASHA KULKARNI**

# HISTORY VS.

## DEVELOPMENT MUST MOVE FORWARD

**I**N 1918, CHINESE IMMIGRANT Thomas Foon Chew built the Bayside Canning Company in what used to be the town of Mayfield. Within a few years, he turned the company into the third-largest cannery in the world at a time when Chinese immigrants were denied legal entry into the U.S., according to the Los Altos Town Crier.

Chew hired workers of all ethnicities and built housing for Chinese workers whose ethnicity prevented them from renting elsewhere. His story of progress and inclusivity should be remembered, especially because the issues Chew confronted have not gone away.

Almost a century after his death, a development company called Sobrato and the Palo Alto Historic Resources Board are now in conflict over Sobrato's proposal to build 74 market-rate townhomes on the site of the old cannery at 340 Portage Ave. Constructing housing would require demolishing 40 percent of the building, which is now a Fry's Electronics store.

Demolishing the building is not a decision that should be taken lightly, but we should be frustrated by the slow progress the city

has made. It has been over three years since Fry's closed its doors, but the empty building still sits in the lot, untouched.

According to Palo Alto Online, the HRB objected to the project with the rationale that destroying the building would be disrespectful to Chew's legacy and make it ineligible for placement on the California Historic Register.

There is no question of the historical value that the building has held in the past. But what's missing from this conversation is the tangible value that demolition could hold in the future.

Palo Alto needs affordable housing. Zillow reported that the average price of a home in Palo Alto was \$3.06 million, as of January. And according to a report from the nonprofit Silicon Valley at Home, Palo Alto has the highest jobs-to-housing imbalance in Santa Clara County, with 3.54 jobs per every housing unit. Although "density" can be an ugly word for some, it "is our destiny," in the words of the Santa Clara County Grand Jury.

It's clear that the members of the HRB have Palo Alto's best interests at heart when they worry that demolishing Fry's building would offend Asian Americans, or when

they encourage adaptive reuse of the building that would serve the community.

But how is preserving the building the best way to honor an underrepresented minority group when many minorities and lower-income people can't even afford to live in Palo Alto today?

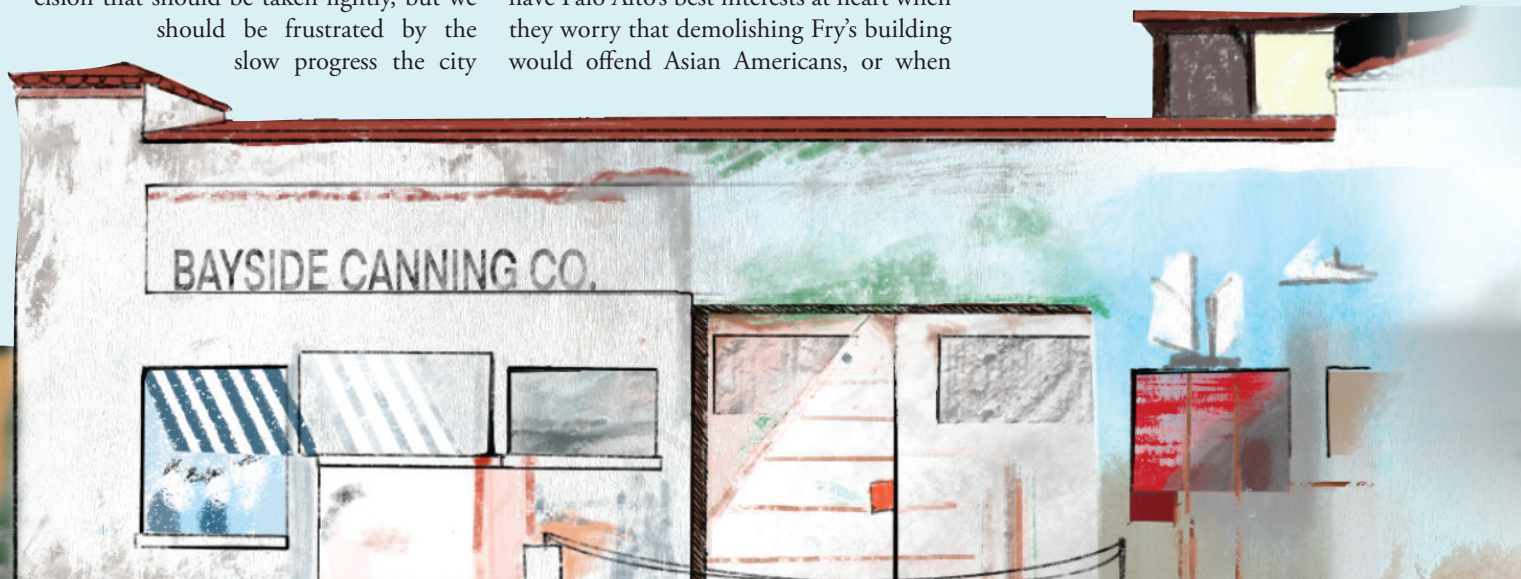
We all need to care, because housing is an equity issue.

*How is preserving the building the best way to honor a minority group when many minorities and lower-income people can't afford to live in Palo Alto today?*

Silicon Valley at Home reported that 56.6% of Palo Alto's homes are single-family detached, and there is a lower proportion of people of color in the city than in the Bay Area as a whole —

a correlation that makes sense, according to Ryan Fukumori, senior associate with the data support system Bay Area Equity Atlas.

"Single-family homes, for a large chunk of the early to mid-20th century, were largely restricted to white residents and white families," Fukumori said. "And even though the racially discriminatory practices were outlawed in the civil rights era, zoning laws became a way to preserve the makeup of single-family homes, suburbs and low-density neighborhoods in a



# HOUSING

way that wasn't explicitly racist, but that favored the status quo."

The city council recently approved 110 units of affordable housing for teachers, but we still have a long way to go. Palo Alto's Regional Housing Needs Allocation, the number of new homes it must build, is 6100, and the city was only 42.2% of the way to the goal as of 2021, according to Silicon Valley at Home.

Because of soaring home prices and restrictive zoning laws, our community is becoming increasingly insulated, isolated and resistant to change.

"Historic preservation can sometimes serve as a lever for folks who are [NIMBY] (not in my backyard) or low-density advocates," Fukumori said. "The face value argument that we want to preserve this space can serve as a backdoor for, 'We don't really want to build affordable housing here.'"

No matter the underlying motives for preservation, Palo Alto's history needs to be taken into account. 25,000 people attended the funeral of the "Asparagus King" in 1931, according to Palo Alto Online, but now Chew's name lacks meaning for most Palo Altans. To teach residents about this important figure in our town's history, Chew's story must be made accessible amid

any changes to the Fry's site.

However, development should proceed. While new housing locations may open up in the future, right now, Fry's is one of the few places in Palo Alto that is zoned for high-density housing. This is an opportunity that we cannot pass up.

In Sobrato's current proposal, watered down in an agreement with the City Council, 60% of the building would remain after demolition to be renovated and used for commercial use. In addition, Sobrato would donate 3.25 acres of land near the building for a park and future affordable housing development.

Like a true compromise, no one will be completely happy.

But we cannot delay this deal any further. The Public Art Commission should approve plaques and exhibits that celebrate Chew's impact on Palo Alto, and then allow the City to move ahead with the demolition of a portion of the building. One housing project cannot solve all of Palo Alto's housing woes, but it is a step in the right direction — a step toward remedying decades of racial and socioeconomic exclusion.

History does not have to be the enemy of progress. Instead, it should inform our future. v

## HOUSING BY THE NUMBERS

**\$3.06**  
MILLION

Median price of  
a home in Palo Alto

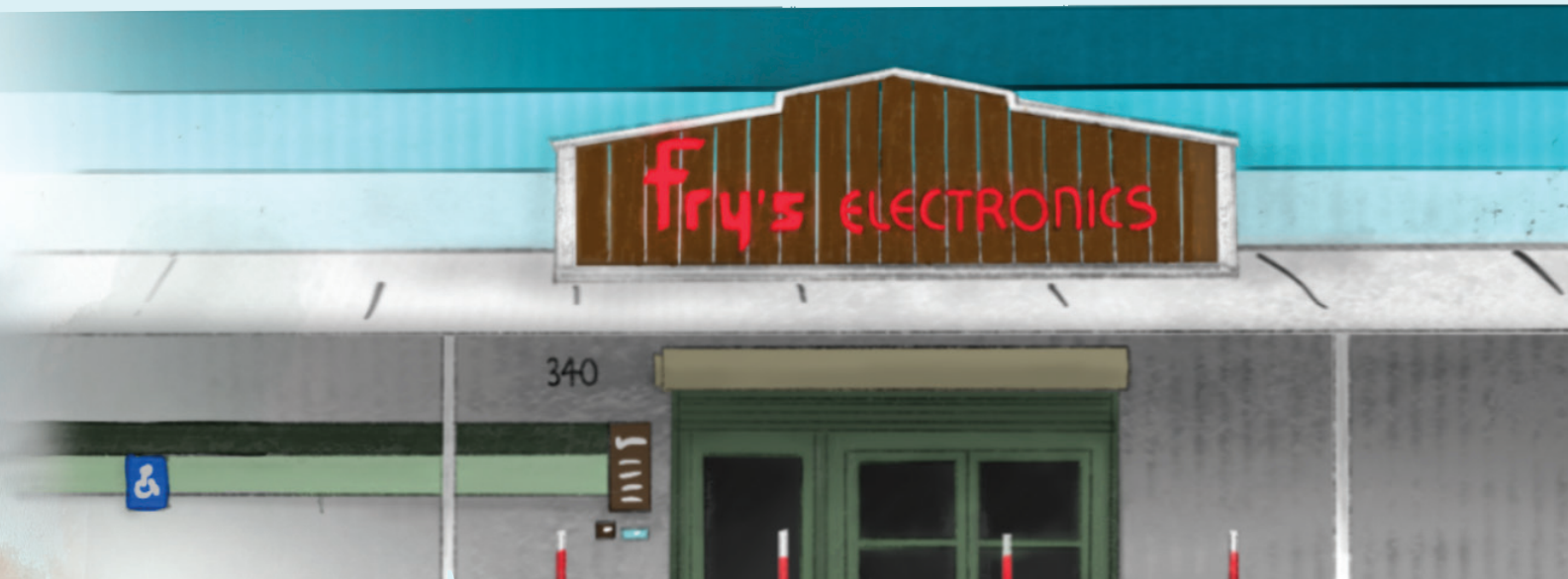
**6,100**  
HOMES

What Palo Alto must build  
to address housing need

**42.2%**  
TO GOAL

By 2021, still need over  
3,000 more housing units

Sources: Zillow, Association of Bay Area Governments, Silicon Valley at Home





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Verde is published five times a year by journalism students at Palo Alto High School. The 2022-2023 dates of publication are:

**Issue 1 - Sept. 29, 2022**

**Issue 2 - Nov. 18, 2022**

**Issue 3 - Feb. 23, 2023**

**Issue 4 - April 10, 2023**

**Issue 5 - May 25, 2023**

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