DISTRICT

Confusion about student representation on board leads to reexamination

BY ATHENA FOSLER-BRAZIL

When Carmel High senior Sebastian Hendricks ran for the position of Associated Student Body president after three years as president of his class, he knew what he was getting into. Mostly. Hendricks was prepared for the meetings, planning and leadership required to captain the CHS student body through another successful year.

What came as a surprise, however, was the debate that arose regarding his role on the Carmel Unified School District Board.

The student representative on the school board is the only direct line of access the student body has to the board, providing the opportunity for students to express their opinions. California Education Code states that student representatives may cast a preferential vote—a vote that simply expresses student preference, but does not function as an actual vote—sit with the board and weigh in on issues that come before the board, providing a direct line of access the student body has to the board. Providing the opportunity for students to express their opinions. California Education Code states that student representatives may cast a preferential vote—a vote that simply expresses student preference, but does not function as an actual vote—sit with the board and weigh in on issues that come before the board, providing a direct line of access the student body has to the board.

According to the senior, he was aware that he was going to be expected to present to the board about high school events, but that was as far as his understanding went.

When Hendricks attended his very first CUSD board meeting, he found his seat in the audience, where his name was written on a piece of paper and taped to the back of a chair. When Carmel Teachers Association president Bill Schrier noticed this, he did some research. Ed Code states that Hendricks should sit on the dais with the rest of the board members, a fact which Schrier brought to the board’s attention. The error was corrected by the next meeting.

But this incident raised a question on the board and at Carmel High: What are Hendricks’ rights on the board?

BOARD REP.

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SPREAD OF INFECTIONS SPARKS CONCERNS REGARDING ATHLETIC FACILITY MAINTENANCE

BY MILES PREKOSKI

When you see the Carmel High football field while driving on Highway 1 towards Big Sur, you might be reminded of the successes of the football team in the CCS playoffs or the numerous Shoe Game victories that took place in the venue. One topic that won’t cross many minds, however, is the degree of cleanliness of the field and the facilities that surround it.

That’s why when multiple student-athletes came down with staph infections at the beginning of the winter sports season in December, Carmel’s athletic trainer and Sports Medicine teacher Matt Borek thought he may have a problem on his hands. Since then, concerns have been raised by administration and sports med staff as to whether the synthetic turf field or certain facilities like the CHS weight room could have led to student infections and how teachers on campus can be aware of what to do about infections on campus.

Carmel High athletic director and head football coach Golden Anderson was looped into the situation when he was reaching the end of the 2019-20 football season. Anderson and CHS Principal Jonathan Lyons became aware of the situation in early December after receiving health reports about cases that took place mid-November.

“We were made aware of cases that happened all at a similar time, cases that were happening in the same area of the campus, so we alerted our custodial staff at that time,” Anderson says.

The athletic director notes that it’s important for staff to not just identify an open wound, but take further steps.

“It wasn’t just a question of ‘Did you get an open flesh wound?’ or ‘Is the wound covered?’ It was about making sure we were diligent in sanitizing the weight room, sanitizing the football field and making sure our teachers and coaches are aware of problems,” adds Anderson, who is entering his 14th year as athletic director and 11th as head coach.

To keep a finely manicured appearance, it’s common practice in the United States to use biocides and weed-killers in certain amounts on synthetic fields, per research conducted by Georgia State University. Biocides have been known to increase the risk of infections from staph bacteria and MRSA, a strain of bacteria resistant to antibiotics. Most research points towards the dangers of synthetic turf focus on the chemical cleaning of turf fields.

Staph infections are transmitted through staphylococcus bacteria, which are common among all individuals. According to research conducted by the Mayo Clinic for Patient Health, there are three million cases of staph infections in the U.S. per year and common staph bacteria can be found in one in three individuals. Infections can turn more serious if bacteria enters the bloodstream or environments where individuals are working with food.

For CHS students, the issues arose after athletes transitioned indoors for winter sports like basketball and wrestling.

“Mr. Borek was talking to us about MRSA spreading around, and I thought it was kind of weird,” says a student-athlete who contracted MRSA during the first semester. “We have these pads that we use for basketball that get really sweaty and we don’t clean them, so we were talking about how that’s a problem too. It was around that time I got a scratch on my arm.”

This particular student case wasn’t serious, but the student noted that multiple weeks passed between getting the scratch and seeing a doctor. In the meantime, it was...
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Board representative
CONT. FROM 1

The fact that the high school is the only site being represented to the board. According to both ASB presidents, the reports they make are focused only on the high schools, though they are supposed to reflect each campus in the district.

“Right now my presentation is only focused on the high school because it’s hard to reach out to the other schools,” said Hendricks, suggesting a possible solution would be to make a panel of student representatives from varying grades, increasing the diversity of student representation.

In December 2019, Hendricks attended a conference hosted by the California School Boards Association in San Diego, where he interacted with ASB presidents and student representatives from across the state. The senior reported back that many schools in California have a panel or team of students that communicates with the board, both easing the burden on one person and increasing the diversity of opinion.

CHS Leadership teacher Aubrey Powers shares Hendricks’ assertion that the district could more effectively communicate with the student body through a team, instead of through a single position.

“I have a Leadership class of 48 students that can provide a pretty good perspective on things,” Powers says. “If there are questions, then [the board] should ask the questions.”

Based on Hendricks’ participation in the December CSBA conference and the agendizing of his position at an upcoming meeting, it appears the district is looking to increase the role of the student representative, and Powers has concerns about how this may impact the students who are considering running for the role of ASB president.

“[If] that role stays with the ASB president, it could change who’s running for that position because I don’t know if that’s what anyone would want to sign up to do,” Powers says.

According to Schrier, this is precisely the reason the role should be separated from the position of ASB president.

“It can be an amazing opportunity for a student who’s interested in going into politics or governance to get some real hands-on experience,” Schrier notes.

If the student representative position is to be expanded in CUSD, Schrier, Powers, Clark and Hendricks agree that the weight-in of the student rep would need to be selective, as not every issue which comes before the board is necessarily relevant for student input. Budgeting, for example, is an issue which Clark chooses to abstain from chiming in on at meetings.

“The topics that are discussed at [meetings] can be very sensitive and some of them deal with a lot of budget stuff, and as a student I feel that those are not proper things for a campus rep to discuss,” Clark adds.

According to CTA president, the students’ preferential vote should not be removed from the equation simply because it will not always be applicable to every topic which comes before the board.

“[Students] don’t know anything about budgets, but they may know something about dress codes, and they may know something about vaping,” says Schrier, explaining that an effective student rep would be trained on when to chime in and when to abstain.

Powers adds that if the district decides to make the student representative a separate position to be filled by a single student, they should expect a substantial shift: “If you make it a political position and you get a politically active person, they’re going to be expecting that they’ll be able to provoke some major changes.”

Carmel High senior Sebastian Hendricks was president of his class for three years before becoming ASB president in 2019.

reports exercising more of the rights stipulated in Ed Code. Though he, too, was assigned the role of student rep when he was elected to ASB president, Clark casts a preferential vote on every issue that comes before the board, abstaining if he doesn’t feel his input would be appropriate. He is also able to make motions to the board.

“The board members really respect my opinion because it is a different point of view,” Clark says. “They’re all adults, and if I chime in they actually think of it as very valid.”

One issue both Clark and Hendricks identify is
Despite prevention and education, paths to drug treatment remain limited for teens

BY ALICIA KRIEGER

Students in Carmel Unified School District are taught the effects of drugs and alcohol from a young age, beginning in elementary school by introducing the concept and eventually revealing the disturbing effects and realities by the time students graduate. At the state level, six percent of high school students reported that they “needed but did not receive treatment at a specialty facility for illicit drug [or alcohol] use,” according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in 2015-16, and Carmel High School is not isolated from these statistics.

“I started with vaping and smoking marijuana every once in a while in middle school,” a CHS junior says. “During freshman and sophomore year I got into some more intense stuff like LSD, shrooms [a hallucinogen], molly [a form of ecstasy], and I drank a lot of alcohol. I knew it was a problem.”

If caught with drugs or alcohol, a minor will not only face consequences at school, but is liable for a fine. “If a student recognizes they have a problem, we recommend they seek help,” CHS social and emotional counselor Lauren Capano says. “But it is very difficult because within the community there is not a lot for adolescents.”

Like all CHS staff, Capano is an obligated reporter, meaning she is required to report any students that are or are suspected of self-harm or harm unto others, and as a result, most students find it difficult to confess or tell someone they have committed a crime even if they need the help. Carmel High puts on a limited number of drug prevention events throughout the school year, coming down to one or two anti-drug guest speakers a year and a week in spring put on by ASB which tries to educate the school as a whole. That’s excluding statewide drugs on campus laws, voluntary random drug testing and the required semester of health.

Drug rehab and education facilities on the peninsula are limited. Drug and Alcohol Intervention Services for Youth provides free education and intervention services to by parents, schools, social services or by court order. DAISY is one of the few free drug education and help centers on the peninsula. Others include Valley Health Associates Youth Outpatient Treatment which is designed for youth and transitional youth (until 24 years old) and the California Youth Opioid Response Monterey branch created in response to the increase of opioid use among teens on the peninsula.

The closest long-term inpatient treatment center is The Camp Recovery Center in Scotts Valley and its short-term treatment center in Santa Lucia as a branch of Door to Hope.

“Hearing the term ‘rehab facility’ sounds intense and punishing,” senior Zachary Brady says. “There needs to be a program that kids are not nervous to approach so that they can get the help that they need without being afraid of the consequences. Sometimes it seems like the school just wants to get you in trouble when they should really just want to help kids.”

The aforementioned junior is one example of a struggling student afraid to ask for help.

“I started to realize that it was an issue when I was constantly asking for it, when my bank account was completely drained, and when I started thinking about my future, like college and stuff,” the junior explains. “I always knew it wasn’t a super great thing for me to be doing, but I guess something just switched.”

This student has been trying to “slow down” his substance use for almost six months. Despite the efforts set forth by the district, some teens continue to find themselves in a position where they have to face real consequences as a result of addiction due to substance abuse.

How do you feel about the options available for teens struggling with addiction?

Lauren Aiello Senior

“I don’t think that the school addresses the problem head on. We need more education and more support for kids actually struggling.”

Grace Parker Senior

“Kids do not want to ask for help with the way the system is set up right now—they are so afraid of punishment.”

Jaden Sissem Junior

“I don’t like it because the response to someone getting caught with drugs is much more punishment-based than a loving and supportive environment to get the help a student really needs.”

ACADEMICS

First semester reveals freshman struggles and successes

BY EMMA BROWN

The first semester of many students’ first year of high school concluded Dec. 20, and in many classes freshmen have been asked to answer upon their first few months as a CHS student, sparking discussion about their transition from eighth grade to high school.

Two hundred of the two hundred forty-nine students in the Class of 2023 ended the semester with a GPA of 3.00 or higher, but despite these successes, freshmen have been asked to adjust academically with their transition from middle school to high school. Students who attended Carmel Middle School explained that they were asked to write an essay without a strict outline provided by their teachers prior to freshman year. They had never experienced a fast-paced lecture, nor a timed writing assignment.

“I definitely didn’t know how to take notes for a lecture,” freshman Peyton Kelly says. “Just like other classes this year, we received no structure, and we had to figure out how to take notes our own way, which was really difficult for me.”

Out of a survey of 30 CHS freshmen, 17 responded that the pace of their classes was quicker than they expected. “This year the classes have moved much faster than I thought they would,” says freshman Grace Wang, who is now taking two honors and one AP class. “Last year, I felt good about where I was in all of my classes. I felt like I was smart. When this year started, I didn’t even know what to do.”

This year, 99 freshmen enrolled in AP Human Geography, one of two Advanced Placement courses open to freshmen enrollment. Out of 30 students surveyed, 19 reported AP Human Geography to be their most challenging course. Students say the difficulty of the course lies predominantly in the manner in which they are expected to learn. AP Human Geography tests require students to not only memorize information, but be able to apply their knowledge to answer complex questions about various situations. Freshmen explain that learning to study for this type of test has proven to be difficult, as they had never been expected to understand the information being taught to them at such a high level before.

“High school is just more rigorous,” CHS English teacher Pat Robel says. “Nobody’s been asking them to read 20 pages a night and make sure they can remember it for a quiz. It’s not an enormously difficult thing to do, but if students haven’t had that experience of reading to not just read a novel, but read it carefully and be able to pay attention to all those intricacies with story, that can be a big change.”

Several CHS teachers add that freshmen courses are intended to lay a strong foundation for more challenging classes students may encounter later on in their education.

FRESHMAN ADJUSTMENT

CONT. ON 5
Playtime, Downtime and Family Time, known to students and faculty as PDF Day, was designed for teachers to close their doors, or at least be told to do so. “It’s going to be a place where his family and friends can come in his honor,” his mother Ruth Stuntz describes. “When you take that away from me I feel completely relieved,” says Nikki Benak, a freshman at Carmel High School. “I don’t know what that is,” freshman Nikki Benak says. “I’ve always been a person who likes to do things on my own, so I really liked the idea of flex time, and I hoped that PDF day would become a kind of springboard for that to be implemented down the road,” Cambra says. “Flex time is different from ‘Playtime, Downtime, Family Time.’ It’s less specific, and it’s really just time to be used in whatever way students see fit. That’s really what we’re trying to do here.” The idea is to give students and teachers the opportunity to use the time for things other than academics. “Sometimes we need those reminders too or someone to say, ‘Hey, if you can, go outside and socialize, or open your door, invite students in, but please don’t use this time to make up tests,’” Cambra says. “And if you want to go do that, you’re going to do that, but I don’t want teachers to feel pressure or students to feel pressured that there’s now some time to do that.”

Some students have expressed confusion at the acronym used to name the event. “Downtime” is pretty self-explanatory, but to some teachers, it means more time to not do anything. “I like it because classes are shorter, and I have more time to do anything,” Gose says. “I think the idea of student social emotional learning, and PDF day at CHS was a direct inspiration from a conference visited by Cambra about the Stanford Graduate School of Education’s project ‘Challenge Success.’ This group organized around the idea of student social emotional learning, and PDF day at CHS was born from a motto emphasized at the Palo Alto conference: ‘Playtime, Downtime, Family Time.’ It’s a good idea behind it,” junior Madison Hart says, but it feels like kind of a waste of time because, for me, I always have to record what I do and can’t do anything in class.” If it’s cold or raining, too, you’re not allowed to go in teachers’ classrooms.” Hart takes four AP classes, does 20 hours of dance a week, teaches classes and serves as a board member for the local nonprofit Dance Kids. For Hart, the intended hiatus from the pressure of academic life is more of a stress than a relief. Sophomores Ruby Maxion and Josie Steiny have a different take on the 30-minute break.

“You’re in the middle of class and you’re just like, ‘Oh, we get to have time just for ourselves,” Steiny says. Maxion agrees, explaining she likes it because it means more time to socialize. The freshman class has only experienced two PDF day, one in September and one in December, and for the most part hasn’t formed opinions as to their effectiveness. “I don’t know what that is,” freshman Nikki Benak says. “It’s going to be a place where his family and friends can come in his honor,” his mother Ruth Stuntz describes. “When you take that away from me I feel completely relieved.”

Senior Maddie Gose goes to her car during the 30 minutes. “I like it because classes are shorter, and I have more time to do anything,” Gose says. For those who don’t experience the benefits the day was designed to generate, Cambra describes the obstacles to encouraging students and teachers to use the time for things other than academics. “We all need to take a moment. So that’ll be there forever, and I don’t think there’s anything more powerful than that,” Killen notes the compelling connection between her father’s time on city council and his bench: When Scenic Avenue was changed from a two-lane road to a one-lane road, Brunn was part of the effort to install the now well-beloved path and the benches along it: “The connection and the big circle of life just felt like the perfect opportunity for a resident.”

The bench in honor of Ryan Field and Alexander Robbins. An 18-year-old college freshman, Stevenson School alum and avid photographer, Braxton Stuntz passed away in January 2019 in a tragic accident after falling into a blowhole during a Big Sur hike. His loved ones gathered together at a ceremony last December to remember Stuntz and see the dedication of the bench. “It’s going to be a place where his family and friends can come in his honor,” his mother Ruth Stuntz describes. “When someone dies, you don’t want anyone to forget the person...so it’s just trying to keep his memory alive.”

In addition to the bench, Stuntz’s parents have also set up the Braxon Stuntz Foundation to continue his lifelong passion for helping others—both at home in Monterey County and abroad in Cambodia, where he worked as a relief volunteer. “We just started based on the things Braxton did and that he cared about and it just went from there,” Stuntz’s mother explains. “I guess that’s all you can do. You try to do good things in [his] name.”

Ruth emphasizes the significance of the bench’s location, which in its position overlooking the bluffs of Carmel Beach stands as a reminder of everything Braxton had loved to do. “It’s beautiful,” she says. “It looks to the left where he used to play with his friends and have Boy Scout beach parties. Then look to the right and you see Pebble Beach, where he used to fly his drone, so it’s a perfect location.”

A few streets away is the bench dedicated to Howard Brunn. His daughter Vance Killen shares that his roles as a local poet, World War II pilot and Carmel City Council member are just a few of the ways he contributed to the community over his 92 years as a resident.

“They are a symbol of the community. They are a representation of the people that live here,” Killen says. “Before Howard passed, he didn’t ask for anything other than a bench,” Killen describes. “People that visit Carmel or people that live here can just sit here on his bench and enjoy the beauty, take a moment. We all need to take a moment. So that’ll be there forever, and I don’t think there’s anything more powerful than that.”

One of the journals at a bench on Scenic Avenue.\n\nPhoto by ANASTASIA ZOLOTOVA\n\nA two-lane road, Brunn was part of the effort to install the now well-beloved path and the benches along it: “The connection and the big circle of life just felt like the perfect opportunity for a resident.”

The bench in honor of Ryan Field and Alexander Robbins is another important benchmark on this path along Scenic. Ten years after its dedication, it remains a place of remembrance for the Carmel High students who died in a crash car off the Big Sur cliffs in 2006. “It’s going to be a place where his family and friends can come in his honor,” his mother Ruth Stuntz describes. “When someone dies, you don’t want anyone to forget the person...so it’s just trying to keep his memory alive.”

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The bench in honor of Ryan Field and Alexander Robbins is another important benchmark on this path along Scenic. Ten years after its dedication, it remains a place of remembrance for the Carmel High students who died in a crash car off the Big Sur cliffs in 2006. “It was something that was going to be there forever. Ryan’s 11th Street surf spot was his favorite place to be,” says Jennifer Field, Ryan’s mother. “On the other hand, it’s hard to see [it] in ways too. It’s just a confirmation that this bench was put in because my son is no longer here.”

Whenever she can, Field tries to keep her son’s memory alive, whether it’s through visiting his bench on runs, giving
Overcrowded Leadership class leads to 40-student cap

BY MIA KOTELEC

Five years ago, Carmel High Leadership teacher Aubrey Powers found herself with roughly 20 students in a small portable classroom near the pool, charged with the task of putting on events for a school of 850 students. This year, 50 students, ranging from freshmen to seniors, joined Powers’ Leadership class, an exceptional number of students to complete the various tasks that face the Associated Student Body, but a taxing load for a teacher to manage alone.

While the number of students in Leadership has nearly tripled since 2015, the class is still held in a room built for fewer than 30, causing Powers to cap next year’s class at 40 students through an application process consisting of an interview and a paper application.

Four-year Leadership student and current ASB president Sebastian Hendricks recalls the class being considerably smaller in past years.

“It’s always been about half the number it is now, maxing out at around 20 or 30,” Hendricks explains.

“When we’re all in there, there’s no way to keep it quiet. People are sitting anywhere they can, and it’s just loud.”

A visitor entering the class would be immediately presented with a room of almost 50 teenagers sitting on whatever surface they can find, brainstorming ways to improve school spirit and carefully planning school-wide events. Broken up into teams, Leadership students disperse around campus to accomplish their daily tasks, alleviating some of the pressure from the single classroom.

“It’s challenging not only because of the number, but because of the nature of students being in different Leadership entities,” Powers says. “We’re going in 11 different directions. There’s an executive group and commissioner positions, so space can be an issue with that.”

Nine elected class officers and 20 commissioners constitute a majority of the class. To ensure a wide range of opinions and voices are heard, Powers seeks to leave ample room for students without a designated, elected position to join.

“Most of the executive and commissioner positions are filled by kids who are juniors and seniors, so they take up a large number of spots in the class,” Powers says. “We try to balance that with underclassmen and people who weren’t voted into an office to get a cross section of different ideas and get people involved.”

Increased interest in joining the class has provided ASB with a wider array of input and opinion in addition to allowing greater development of committee teams. Due to the creation of newer roles such as a documentarian and commissioner of creative changes, the class has expanded to include those students.

While the increase has helped ease officer workload and promoted a more diversified approach to Leadership at CHS, some feel the class is too large and express concern over a lack of initiative and unmet potential.

“It’s helpful to have more people doing busy work and necessary tasks, but it’s the taking initiative and planning extraordinary events that’s not happening,” Hendricks says.

Other members of the class share this sentiment, noting that some classmates sit idle and jobless during fifth period.

“There are a lot of people who don’t have a specific job and are just kind of sitting there,” says Elise Head, a junior in Leadership.

Powers disagrees, explaining the class has grown through the expansion of positions, which has enabled ASB to devise and plan more events than ever before.

“It hasn’t necessarily created inefficiency because at the same time it has created and expanded a role for somebody that didn’t exist three years ago,” she explains.

Yet in an effort to reduce the class to a more manageable level and promote better group focus, the new application process may be introduced as soon as next school year.

“I think that there should be an application for first-year students, but anyone who has been in Leadership, and who the teacher hasn’t had a problem with, should be able to stay in the class,” Hendricks says.

While adding an application may help ensure that only students who are dedicated and focused participate, it raises possible negatives. Some fear the process could turn potential members away for fear that they may not get in, or simply because of the extra hurdle to join the class.

“An application might make people think it’s too serious and not want to apply,” freshman Isabella Cardinale says. “I don’t know if I would have joined if there were an application. It might intimidate underclassmen especially.”

Not wanting to exclude a student who could benefit the class before getting a chance to know them, Powers had been hesitant to cap the class, but insists it is a necessary change in order for ASB to function quickly and effectively. She emphasizes that the ideal class size is 40, but she needs to maintain a diverse array of students from all grades.

“It’s Leadership, and I feel like it needs to be representative of the student body,” Powers explains. “It’s a hard balancing act to find the best scenario.”

Freshman adjustment

CONT. FROM 3

their high school careers.

“In middle school, teachers are still taking care of their students because they’re still young,” CHS math teacher Dawn Hatch says. “But when they get up to high school, we have to prepare them for the next level. It’s not like we don’t care, but we have to start making them more accountable. I think sometimes freshmen are shocked by that.”

As freshmen approach their second semester, many ninth grade teachers note that it is their hope that the skills they taught their students in the first semester will help them not only in their sophomore year, but later on in life.

What has been the hardest part of high school?

Staying on top of all of my work has been really hard.

Reygan Bethea

I just feel overwhelmed all the time.

Flint Nachbar

Not letting my emotions get in the way of how I do in class or how hard I work.

Marin Herro

“High school has made me work harder,” freshman Nikos Douros says. “It’s made me more determined to do better.”

With approximately 80 percent of the freshmen class on the honor roll for the first semester, counselors and teachers say that they hope for similar results in the final semester of their first year of high school.

The hardest part of high school has been keeping up with the workload.

Kaitlyn Ajir
Even with the rise of technology, teenagers still reading for pleasure

BY KYLIE YEATMAN

Given the barrage of entertainment options at the fingertips of the average teenager, it’s a common belief that literacy is decreasing among teens, who may choose to succumb to the advent of their phones over the written word. Despite this discouraging reality, librarians have made it their goal now more than ever to help teens find a passion for books that they may not have otherwise discovered.

“Carmel teens are just as passionate about reading as ever,” Harrison Memorial Library librarian Lisa Walling says. “Our annual statistics show they are borrowing books, magazines and audiobooks from the library and downloading them from our website just as much as ever.”

As revealed by statistics from Harrison Memorial, the number of overall works checked out by teen readers throughout the 2010s actually saw an increase since 2012, with 611 total books being checked out by teenagers in 2019, compared to 419 in 2012.

The importance of encouraging teen readership is emphasized by the percent of teens who consistently read books for their own personal entertainment. According to a 2018 American Psychological Association study, less than 20 percent of teens reported a book, magazine or newspaper for their own enjoyment.

“There’s so much easily digestible content available to teenagers,” Carmel High senior Cameron DeBelis comments. DeBelis notes that it took finding a book on his own that he was specifically interested in, that being Chuck Palahniuk’s “Fight Club,” to spark an organic interest in reading outside of the classroom.

While it’s possible to use digital media to read books online, the variety of entertainment options available to teens tends to be a pull factor from reading.

“Teenagers have a lot of other online hobbies [other than reading],” says avid reader Shannon Jackson, a CHS junior who largely focuses her reading on fiction and fantasy novels. “For me, reading is fun because I’m a very visual person, but some kids might not just want to stare at a page.”

Many active teenagers at CHS note their belief that teenagers choose not to read during the school year because they might be put off by being obligated to read in school.

Acknowledging the apathy that some students have towards reading for pleasure, CHS librarian Elleen Schnur has made strides in the library to highlight books proven to be popular among teenagers.

“We try to have students do reviews on the book they hand in and ask them if it’s something that they’d recommend to other students,” explains Schnur, noting a section of the library devoted to teen recommendations.

In both the CHS library and the Harrison Memorial Library, an uptick in the popularity of comic books and graphic novels has been observed. Librarians note that these books can serve as an entry point into making reading a consistent hobby, as they’re more accessible.

Libraries also take into account the popularity of audiobooks and e-books among younger readers. Having someone read the book directly to them can be ideal for traveling or multi-tasking and can be easier to focus on for some readers. Junior Xander Selby-Lara explains his use of audiobooks in tandem with physical books to create a more connected reading experience.

“Reading that way helps me connect some of the smaller plot points, symbols and ideas that I would most likely have missed on otherwise,” explains Selby-Lara, who adds that having ADHD can make it difficult for him to solely focus on a physical book.

Walling adds that the mingling of technology and books will be a big part of the future of the library, especially for teen readers.

“The more people know they can load books and audiobooks onto their smartphones or iPads, the more often they seem to want to,” Walling says. “We definitely see teens doing this more and more.”

The expansion of Harrison Memorial’s focus on teen readers began after the library organized what they call a “teen lounge” for young readers, which includes a selection of young-adult and fantasy titles that were previously more difficult to find in the library.

Further encouragement for teen readership comes from their Teen Advisory Board, which looks to tailor the library to the specific desires of teen readers.

The Carmel Presbyterian Church’s youth group enjoys a week-long trip to Shasta Lake for the annual Houseboats Trip.
Participation in academic clubs driven by passion and prospects

BY LOGAN FALKEL

Ethics Bowl, Robotics, Mock Trial, Model U.N. and Science Olympiad are five academic clubs at Carmel High School which focus on STEM, debate or the judicial system. More academic clubs are emerging because participation in these clubs looks good on college applications.

Generally for two reasons: Because the students are passionate about that particular field of study, or because participation in these clubs looks good on college applications.

“Most people are authentically involved in Science Olympiad,” says junior Sierra Seifert, the club’s president. “But there are definitely some members who are there only for college applications.”

According to teacher coaches, students joining for purposes of college applications is nothing new.

“I joined Mock Trial because my friend’s sister was the president and [history teacher Bill] Schrier was the coach, but I think that college was also a factor,” says Alex Poletti, 2018 CHS graduate and Mock Trial alum. “I think that Mock Trial was the most impressive part of my application.”

According to college counselor Darren Johnston, being a part of an academic club such as the ones offered at CHS doesn’t necessarily make a person stand out on a college application.

“All these kids who join clubs thinking it will carry weight...should know it’s a scam,” Johnston explains.

Admissions officers aren’t ignorant of how high school functions.

According to Johnston, it’s not the particular subject matter of the club that colleges look for, but rather involvement in a team. In particular, colleges look for leadership within these clubs.

“College admissions officers aren’t looking for joiners, they’re looking for doers,” Johnston says.

“It’s not so much the club itself, but amount a student is involved in that club, the action they’re taking as a member or participant. To colleges, that means leadership.”

Rigorous and intensive, these clubs demand commitment from their members, which ultimately creates for a cohesive team of students.

“Our team works really well together,” senior Robotics member Marcus Lo says. “We do a lot of collaboration. We eat together, build together and treat each other like a family. It gives people a bigger reason to stay.”

The hard work of these committed individuals can be seen in the success of each program. In January, the Ethics Bowl team proceeded to the quarterfinals in their annual tournament, where they debated the ethics of morally contentious situations.

Similarly, Science Olympiad and Model U.N. are in the process of preparing for annual competitions, while Mock Trial is defending its six-year victory streak at the Monterey County competition in early February.

“I think the hardest part of preparing for competitions is budgeting our time and getting enough members to contribute to the team,” Lo says. “Each member has a unique role within the team, so we always need hands on board.”

Club members say that it’s their fellow members who are the highlight of the club experience.

“The people were the best part of Mock Trial for me,” Poletti says. “I think that’s the best part of any experience, the human connections you make. I made a lot of friends, people who I still know today.”

STUDENT RELIGION

CONT. FROM 6

campus, though.”

Senior Kayla Pereira is a practicing Mormon and president of all the juvenile girls that attend her Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. She has not always been involved with Mormonism though.

“My family used to be Catholic,” Pereira explains. “When I was around seven, we started going to church and eventually were baptized.”

Now the teen attends an hour of worship every morning before school, as well as a longer service on Sunday mornings and Wednesday evenings. Individually, she reads and studies the Book of Mormon and the Bible every night.

“I am really close with my leaders since we all believe in the same things,” Pereira says. “It is nice to have someone to talk to. Everyone is very understanding because it is built into the religion to be forgiving.”

While most agree that CHS is a fairly respectful space for their faith, many students can recall some sort of backlash for outwardly practicing their religion.

“I think CHS is fairly open, but when we were trying to start the Free Food Club, people were getting the wrong idea,” Crabbe details. “Students said that we were preaching the Bible and just trying to catfish people into joining, which is not necessarily true. It was upsetting to see how multiple people portrayed it and started rumors. They were calling it a cult, and it was offensive.”

Senior Chase Jones, a practicing Christian, explains that he often talks religiously with friends who are of another faith.

“I’ve never felt unwelcome at CHS,” Jones begins. “There are certain people who make fun of me for it, but nothing too bad.”

Golechha, as well as many other students, doesn’t allow religious differences to get in the way of friendship or camaraderie.

“I have friends who are atheist or practice different religions,” Golechha concludes. “It doesn’t affect our dynamic because that normally isn’t the first thing you discuss with a friend, but it does serve as an interesting conversation. It is good to hear different points of view because you become more empathetic and understanding.”

COMMUNITY

Carmel streetlights to implement LED lighting

BY CASSIE GORMAN

The 17 street lights gracing Carmel-by-the-Sea will be getting a mini makeover with the installation of LED bulbs sometime this spring or summer, but currently the Carmel Public Works Department is performing a pilot with three street lights in Carmel with LED bulbs varying in wattage and light warmth to determine the best bulb for Carmel.

With a survey online, the city hopes to receive feedback from its residents on the best light before implementing the project in its entirety.

PG&E initially approached the Public Works Department in December 2018 with the desire to replace the current, high-pressure sodium light bulbs with LEDs. PG&E is doing this at no cost to the city, a win-win for both the company and the city.

“[LED bulbs] are more efficient, they last longer, it is less maintenance…we want to make sure we don’t install something that doesn’t work for the community,” says Agnes Martelet, the environmental compliance manager of the Public Works Department.

With 15 watts and 2700 kelvins, the dimmest bulb resides in the northeast corner of Monte Verde and Third Street. The other two LED streetlights are in the Del Mar parking lot. Each of these street lights has a barcode at the base that you can scan with your phone to take a survey.

After the survey ended on Jan. 31, the department plans to take the results to its planning commission and propose the light replacement project. After the planning commission, the proposal will be taken to City Hall for approval.

“The process tends to take a while, but at the end of the day, it’s important to get public opinion,” Martelet says.

Carmel is following in the footsteps of other cities on the peninsula, like Monterey, who have already made the switch to LED street lights.
Jan. 14 Carmel climate forum addresses potential impact of climate change on coastal town

BY ATHENA FOSLER-BRAZIL

Sitting at a long table at the front of Sunset Center’s Carpenter Hall, CHS senior and Environmental Club president Mia Poletti gathers her notes. She is far by the youngest person seated at the table, but she is unimimidated.

Poletti is one of six speakers at the Carmel Advisory Board’s climate change forum, an event moderated by former Congressman Sam Farr. About two thirds of the seats in the conference room are full, a turnout most of which the speakers agree is remarkably high for this type of event. This panel of speakers is assembled not only to discuss climate change, but specifically what Carmel is looking to do to mitigate the impacts of a warming climate.

Farr’s introduction is community-focused, as are most of the other speakers’ words.

“I would love the city to be known around the world as a green community in lifestyle and in practice,” says Farr, emphasizing that he hopes to see actionable plans that produce change, not just talk.

After Farr’s introduction, the first speaker is Carrie Theis, Carmel city councilwoman and co-chair of the climate committee for the City of Carmel.

“We’ve been changed with developing a climate adaptation and action plan for the city,” Theis explains of the climate committee’s role. Simply put, she’s working to help Carmel prepare for the potentially drastic impacts of climate change. But her job is tricky. She poses a question to the audience: “How do you prepare for what you don’t know?”

The climate committee is starting with a few basic questions: Can Carmel’s sewers handle increasingly large storms? Should they start planting trees native to warmer climates? How will the coastal city manage potential sea level rise?

The next speaker on the agenda is Poletti, who has been tasked with bringing the pathos to the evening. Poletti describes what it’s like coming of age “on a dying planet,” and she uses the term “climate grief” to characterize what many students her age are feeling.

“I’m not going to lie, we’re angry and we’re stunned,” Poletti says. “What will it take for us to change?”

As president of the CHS Environmental Club, she encourages city support of high school events and addresses the increase in students headed into environmental fields.

Barbara Buikema, general manager of the Carmel Wastewater District, is the third speaker on the panel. She informs the forum that the treatment plant has been told they may need to relocate, as they are positioned within flooding range of the Carmel River and are at risk of infiltration from sea level rise.

“Sewers are critical to a healthy community,” explains Buikema, noting that the plant currently treats 1.2 million gallons of water every day.

Following Buikema is David Revell, the founding principal of Revell Coastal, a sustainable coastal resource management company that has helped numerous towns along the coast prepare for flooding events and sea level rise. Revell Coastal has worked with 18 jurisdictions across the state and conducted studies for both Monterey and Santa Cruz Counties.

Revell explains the factors his company looks at when assessing risk in a coastal area, including erosion, fluvial flooding, inundation and stormier flooding.

The options, he explains, are to protect, retreat, accommodate or do nothing, and actionable plans usually involve a combination of the first three.

The next speaker on the panel is Rafael Payan, general manager for the Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District. Payan’s focus is on Carmel Valley’s 190 acre Rancho Canada, which was purchased by a coalition of nonprofits in partnership with the Park District and is being converted into a park and habitat for native species. Payan emphasizes the importance of collaboration when it comes to restoration and getting people engaged with nature.

“What if our efforts were one effort?” Payan asks of the audience. “The key to the coalition of agencies involved with Rancho Canada’s restoration, Payan says that the park’s maintenance will only cost taxpayers $6,000 annually.

The final speaker at the table is Tiffany Wise-West, the sustainability and climate action manager for the City of Santa Cruz. Santa Cruz adopted a climate action plan in 2012, which includes goals to convert municipal energy into sustainable energy, increase the urban canopy and reduce single-occupancy vehicles.

According to Wise-West, of the plan’s original 13 goals, they have met three, are on track to meet five and are not on track to meet five. She explains that while the city has done things like implement a 5 percent tax on diesel purchases and build more bike lanes, people’s personal habits are difficult to change. She says incentivization and competition are vital, and the city has already achieved their greenhouse gas emissions reduction goal for 2020.

The City of Carmel is looking to Santa Cruz as an example of an effective climate action plan. According to Theis, Carmel’s plan will likely be rolled out through August of 2021, but if the city decides to hire an outside consultant the timeline will be shorter.

The six speakers and Farr all emphasize the same things: community engagement, collaboration and a healthy dialogue around climate change. For coastal tourist economies like Carmel, protection of natural resources is key to the town’s survival.

Staff deates merits of classroom social media use

It is widely known that teenagers are the main users of social media, while most adults are known to steer clear of it. The latter is the case for most of the teachers at Carmel High School, but there are a few staff members that use social media in order to promote their classes, clubs and events at the high school.

An avid user of social media is Principal Jon Lyons, who constantly posts on his personal and school Instagram and Twitter accounts. He has two different accounts in order to keep his personal life separate from his work life. He is constantly seen taking pictures and videos at almost every school events, such as the VAPA Show, basketball games, Singer-Songwriters’ performances and many others.

It’s a way to give people the inside of what Carmel High School is like, what are we about and what are the cool things that we have,” says Lyons, who also explains that when posting, he is technically speaking for the school as a whole and needs to be careful with what he posts about it.

CHS art teacher Steve Russell uses Instagram and Twitter to post pictures with the intent of promoting what is happening in his classes and what his students are currently doing. Russell has many self-imposed rules in place when it comes to his use of social media, including not posting any political messages and not following any students until after they graduate.

“It’s just another part of being an educator in the 21st century,” Russell says. “You have to engage in [social media].”

The art teacher explains that it’s fun for him to share things that he and his classes are engaged in, such as the Chalk Fest and Art Expo. He also expresses how he thinks social media is a necessary tool for reaching out and networking, while also being used for inspiration.

Leigh Cambra, the CHS health teacher and This Club Saves Lives adviser, mainly uses Instagram and Twitter, where she has a personal, school and multiple club accounts.

She also points out how she created the Padre Bob accounts and thinks the school should be present on social media, explaining that some of her best ideas come from social media.

Kurt Grahl, CHS math teacher and basketball coach, was prodded into getting a Facebook account by his former basketball players, who wanted to follow and stay connected with him. Although he does not post much, when he does he only posts family related pictures. Grahl mentions if he were to post school-related pictures, he would create a different account and clearly separate his personal life from his work life. He also has the same rule of not following students unless they have graduated, but Grahl likes to wait a year or two before following them back, to let them be out and away from the school.

When used responsibly, Grahl thinks that social media is great, but since they are in the early phase of social media use and posting images publicly, there can be some issues. He believes that everyone needs to think about how they want to use social media and use it responsibly.

Steve Nacht, a Carmel High math teacher who does not have social media, says, “If I had social media, I would have the account locked, where it would be social amongst the class or classes within the school.”

Social media has become more important to some of the staff at Carmel High School, including Lyons, Russel and Cambra. Most teachers do not have social media, but nonetheless, there are some who use it to connect with others, post pictures of their personal life, while also informing the community of school events.
The culture of self-deprecation overwhelmingly present among teens

BY JORDI FAXON

It's common to see students jokingly flaunting their D's on tests, insisting that their stupid for asking a question or criticizing themselves or others. This method may be casual enough that we haven't come to think about it, but it's worth our concern.

The habit of self-deprecation, insulting oneself, has been growing among the student body, but still isn't discussed widely at CHS. In academic settings, I hear many students berate themselves for not knowing the correct answer or being there to learn or forgetting trivial details. In casual settings, students often half-consciously undermine their physical traits and intelligence. It can be heard loudly, and it’s a troubling phenomenon.

To be clear, it isn’t wrong to open up about our self-doubts, and strong emotions should never be smothered. Talking about them and strong emotions should never be ignored or taken back. It can be heard loudly, and thus secure themselves in other people’s minds as modest and humble. In an age where comedic value is largely co-extensive with shock value, many people even seem to try throwing all of their cards on the table. In this light, self-deprecation could even be seen as someone’s “harmless” way of being acknowledged is possible. As with most social trends, it isn’t limited to this school. On Episode 14 of the podcast “Conversations with People Who Hate Me,” host Dylan Marron speaks with a woman who had harassed herself online from ages 12 to 14. She speculates that it was a coping mechanism, letting her hear others to the punch or to get people to worry about her. While behavior like this isn’t overt at CHS, self-deprecation among students here could share the same intention, and this is a worrying prospect.

Many have rightly noted that the pervasiveness of photo-shopped models in advertisements can lend itself to a culture of body negativity among women. Others say that the mere nature of social media, how celebrities that curate their lives for their viewers present an unrealistic expectation of happiness, leads to a similar self-loathing among teens. Either way, it seems to be a pathology of the youngest generation.

Regardless of its origins, the habit should be met with measured alarm. Even if it starts as a means to secure social integration, it could become a mantra through enough repetition. Part of fixing this problem isn’t not alerting to casual but overblown comments of self-loathing, but also encouraging the self-inflictors to open up about their insecurities. The best that any of us can do is to be amicable and non-judgmental to people who are predisposed to see themselves as inherently wrong.

CUSD overlooks environmental flaws in accepting the Green Ribbon Award

BY GRACE PAUL

When one thinks of Carmel Unified School District, one thinks of a relatively eco-friendly place. After all, the middle school focuses heavily on being environmentally friendly with its use of the Hilton Bialek Habitat, and even the high school has a class dedicated to environmental sciences and an active environmental club. So when the district applied for the Green Ribbon Award, an award given out to sustainable schools by the U.S. Department of Education, most people think that CUSD would make a good candidate.

But just because the middle school is a great example of a sustainable school does not mean the rest of the district is. Carmel High School is a case where rules are commonly put in place only to be ignored or taken back.

One of the honorees for California from 2019 is Rialto Unified School District. RUSD has run several projects over the past few years, including replacing its landscape with drought-resistant plants and installed devices to reduce water usage; water usage was reduced by 24 percent as a result. Additionally, they constantly use compostable plates and bowls in their classes to help teach. This simply isn’t the case at Carmel schools, and most often the environment isn’t considered a priority.

For example, the high school virtually lacks a recycling system. Years ago, the district brought trash cans labeled with “waste,” “recyclables” and “compost.” Students did not follow the labels, and eventually the school decided to get rid of the “compost” option. When the bleachers or amphitheater are full of trash after lunch, the worst punishment dealt is not being able to sit there for the next few days. The issue of trash is not brought up nearly as much as at the middle school. At Carmel Middle School, if there is an issue, not only is that area closed, but it is brought up by teachers and by science and drama teacher Pat Stadille at the weekly assemblies. The environment is always a big part of the discussion, and there is a level of accountability.

At CMS, all sixth graders are required to take a class called “Eco-Lit.” There, students learn about how the environment works and doing hands-on activities. They also have to sort the school’s trash into separate buckets based on how and where they can be recycled. From this, they learn to use more responsible while sorting their trash. At the high school, students aren’t told to focus on the environment nearly as much, and helping the environment becomes less of a priority.

Another problem takes its shape in energy use. At RUSD, there have been many projects to reduce energy use. Solar energy covers 80 percent of their energy use, and a bit of the remaining energy is also renewable. Renewable energy is not a top priority at CUSD, and with the amount of energy used, it should be more important. The district has run energy conservation projects in the past, but a problem still arises when it comes to appliances in classrooms. Often there are microwaves, mini-fridges and electric kettles in classrooms, and they often aren’t unplugged over breaks, wasting lots of power. Though it doesn't seem like a major problem, the energy use adds up over time, as it is a problem throughout the district, not just at the high school.

Overall, the Carmel district is an environmentally aware district, but isn’t exactly environmentally friendly or sustainable, and it definitely does not deserve a reward for its minimal efforts.

The case for Sen. Bernie Sanders

BY ANDREW WANG

As the Democratic primaries draw closer, it’s clear that all candidates have one goal in common: defeat Donald Trump. Self-proclaimed democratic socialist Bernie Sanders is the only one who can do it.

Sanders has been rising in the polls since last year. Following his heart attack in October 2020, Sanders would not come to an end, as his polling numbers had dropped below both Elizabeth Warren’s and former Democratic nominee hopeful Kamala Harris’. Sanders proved otherwise and has firmly established himself as the runner-up in many polls, even surpassing frontrunner Joe Biden in some recent polls for early states. One recent poll by the Public Policy Institute of California showed that in this state Sanders amassed 27 percent of votes, surpassing Biden’s 23 percent.

Clearly, Sanders is doing something right. There was once a time in America where being labeled a “socialist” would permanently demote a politician’s career. It now seems largely supportable. More than ever, people are implementing such programs. Technically speaking, public schools are a socialist program. Roads are a socialist program. Sanders, an ardent populist, has weakened the stigma behind the ominous concept of “socialism” by popularizing policies like Medicare for All and college debt relief, ideas that have found vast support among the working class. He is a modern-day progressive pioneer.

The 2020 Sanders campaign has grown immensely from its 2016 predecessor. This new campaign has addressed many of the criticisms of his old one, including the introduction of a more diverse cast of campaign organizers. Sanders has also pledged not to take big-dollar donations. Rather, he raises money through small grassroots donations, becoming the fastest candidate in history to hit 1 million individual donors. Although the Democratic National Convention slighled Sanders from the nomination in 2016, he introduced the party to ideas that are now commonplace discussion.

Whichever the DNC nominates will have to be able to reach out to the voters that Hillary Clinton did not reach. Moderate Joe Biden will be unable to expand far beyond Clinton’s sphere. In 2016, Trump, who could also be considered a populist, captured the working class vote in critical swing states. He promised that he was “not like other Republicans” and would not cut Medicare or Medicaid, while prioritizing the interests of the working class. People voted for Trump because he claimed to be a politician and presented himself as an outsider who promised to end the corruption of Washington.

Trump’s promises are largely unfulfilled. Although the economy is fairing well, it is unclear if the trend will continue. Furthermore, his policies have benefited the rich the most, contradicting the message of his populist campaign, and although jobs are being created, wages remain low. Midwestern factory jobs have not returned and the trade war with China has hurt low-income families the most. Though of programs are slated for substantial cuts, and there seems to be a constant stream of scandal coming from the White House.

If there’s one thing to remember about the Vermont senator, it is his consistency and his trustworthiness. No modern politician has a record as clean and consistent as Bernie Sanders does. Spanning over 50 years, Sanders has always been one to stand up for the underdog, first seen during his extensive involvement during the Civil Rights movement. He played a major role in a sit-in protest at the University of Chicago to advocate against racist housing policies.
‘Star Wars: The Rise of Skywalker’ leaves fans wanting more despite strong ending to the franchise

BY ZOE GARDEN

“The Rise of Skywalker” was doomed before it even hit theaters, forced to battle the looming expectations of a diverse fan base wanting the perfect ending to an iconic franchise that rests on old storylines to avoid alienating die-hard fans, or at least reinterprets previous plots—“Rise of Skywalker” is no exception to this. As for the twists, they don’t come from the characters but rather add additional, crucial depth to the characters. The discovery of Rey’s true identity is the most significant one, giving her more complexity, supplementing the significance of her mission and providing for the ultimate emotional payoff at the end.

Now, that’s not to say the movie lacks deeply constructed scenes and plot twists. More than a few questions are left on the table, including severalunnamed plot holes. Some of the side characters add nothing but irrelevant dialogue and humor that wildly misses its mark. And an overall lightly developed storyline, a couple conflicts arise for roughly two minutes before being clumsily squashed or even flat-out unaddressed.

Despite facing the horrifying obstacle of bringing closure to a universe of legendary characters, Abrams proves capable of tackling the incredible task, providing a fiery and satisfying finale with “Rise of Skywalker” that holds its weight among the other “Star Wars” films and successfully concludes the franchise.

7/10

‘You’ keeps you on your edge of the seat

BY MICHAEL LAUND

Sometimes 1 sit and wonder, “Who would ever root for a serial killer?” It seems like Netflix has answered this question by hyping up the highly anticipated final season of the hit thriller series “You.”

It’s a thrill ride that kicks off with its new installment. The first episode, “The Trapper,” introduces exciting new characters that keep them romantically separate on a compelling show that is truly a captivating show to watch. The second season is no exception— it’s filled with twists and turns that keep you on the edge of your seat.

The show’s main character, Joe, is a charmingly charismatic and dangerous serial killer who has a knack for winning over his victims. He is charismatic and charming, but also dangerous and unpredictable. As the season progresses, Joe becomes more and more dangerous, making it difficult for the audience to root against him.

However, despite the show’s success, there are some issues that detract from the overall experience. The pacing of the show is slow at times, and the plot can be confusing at times. Also, the show’s depiction of mental illness is problematic, as it perpetuates stereotypes of mental illness and fails to offer any meaningful commentary on the issue.

Overall, “You” is a thrilling and addictive show that is well worth your time. It’s the perfect blend of suspense and romance, making it a must-watch for fans of the genre.

8/10

Film adaptation of ‘Little Women’ stays true to the classic tale, wins heart of viewers

BY ANASTASIA ZOLOTOW

Since its release in 1868, the novel “Little Women” by Louisa May Alcott has captured hearts for generations with its timeless tale of family and sisterhood. One may think such a reputation is hard to live up to, but director Greta Gerwig’s adaptation does not disappoint, capturing the beloved story with a contemporary take and a stellar cast.

The film’s protagonists—sisters Meg, Jo, Beth and Amy March—induce the domestic struggles and joys of a middle-class family during the nineteenth century, along with their close friend Theodore “Laurie” Laurence.

For the first hour, the plot follows two different timelines seven years apart, which later merge into one. Although this may confuse viewers and spill several endings from the beginning—like the result of two separate timelines forming romantic relationships—it sets an interesting parallel between the past and the present, allowing audiences to have a different perspective on the past as they see what they’re missing.

The film also boasts a veteran cast of famed Hollywood actors. Emma Watson as Meg, Laura Dern as the sultry mother March, Saoirse Ronan as Jo, and Florence Pugh as Amy truly steal the show in their performances as the March sisters. Each actor perfectly captures the essence of their character, bringing the March family to life on screen.

However, the film is not without its flaws. At times, Gerwig strays from the original plot. The ending itself, which leaves one of the sisters’ futures open to interpretation, is a well-needed choice that adds complexity, supplementing the significance of her mission and providing for the ultimate emotional payoff at the end.

Despite these flaws, “Little Women” is a heartwarming adaptation that stays true to the classic tale, winning the hearts of viewers with its timeless tale of family and the struggles that people face—whether in the constraints of society or for the ultimate emotional catharsis at the end.

8/10

‘The Mandalorian’ stumbles in first season, but successfully brings heart and intrigue to new characters

BY ZOE GARDEN

At the risk of creating a self-aware, money-making show catering to adults seeking a taste of nostalgia and good old-fashioned entertainment to anyone less familiar with the franchise, “The Mandalorian” introduces exciting new worlds and characters that fail to please a wide audience, bringing both nostalgia to die-hard fans and good-old-fashioned entertainment to anyone less familiar with the franchise.

The Mandalorian’s character development throughout the show, largely inspired by the Child, is wholesome if a tad formulaic. Though a rocky start, the first season of “Mandalorian” introduces exciting new worlds and characters that fail to please a wide audience, bringing both nostalgia to die-hard fans and good-old-fashioned entertainment to anyone less familiar with the franchise.

Chapter 4 follows the hunter as he teams up on a planet Logan with romantic interest and co-star Cara Dune, one of the show’s most compelling characters, and offers to protect its citizens from raiders. The episode features an unexpectedly intense action sequence involving a codependent brother Forty (James Scully), whose feelings are completely different from his of Beck. Until he starts talking again. Are we supposed to believe that the Child has really changed him enough in the span of a couple of days to make him want to adjust his entire lifestyle and settle down? This extra plot point is much like celery in a side dish: No one ever asked for it and it adds nothing of value.

The fact that each episode is directed by a different person is a double-edged sword. While it makes for diverse storylines, it also feels somewhat disjointed and at times, the show’s focus appears to be on the Child. In this case, the majority of the show’s pull seems to rest on one character more significantly than the others: the wildly human-like “Child.” This can lead to some obvious parallels to Star Wars, but instead of being one of the main characters, the Child is perceived as an obstacle to the ultimate emotional catharsis at the end.

Rotten Tomatoes
Students have no choice

BY JACK JARVIS

As a freshman, there’s nothing better than proving your physical fitness by standing half-naked in front of your peers. Then a teacher holding a clipboard says you have to jump in the water.

To graduate from Carmel High School all students must pass a swim test consisting of four laps in the pool and 15 minutes treading water in the deep end. Linda Galuppo, the CHS registrar, explains that since the 1960s the swim test has been both a life-saving measure and a hurdle. After a CHS student drowned at Carmel Beach, legendary CHS swim coach Bob Walthour persuaded the principal at that time to require a swim test for all graduating students.

Across California, high schools disagree on the purpose of a swim test as a graduation requirement. Schools like Palo Alto and Acadia High still require a swim test, but that’s where the similarities end. Students at Acadia are simply required to jump in from the side of the pool and touch the other. If one can’t swim the lap required, the school allows seniors to sign a contract.

But Carmel is different. Surrounded by pristine blue skies and ocean waves, a good half of the students here have spent nearly their entire lives waist deep in water. Living on the peninsula, the ability to swim could be lifesaving given that oceans, rivers and streams surround us on all sides.

So does the swim test actually encourage swimming proficiency in those who can’t swim?

On the first day of P.E., swimming, the publicity of it becomes immediately apparent. Goosenecks prick freshmen’s skin from the cold as they’re sorted into levels of swimming proficiency in front of their peers.

Teaching swim team champions alongside doggy paddlers proves problematic as it’s hard to ask for help on something that other kids have already mastered. In theory, all students should excel in the swim program. Less experienced swimmers are paired up with experienced swimmers to encourage growth.

But even this depends on how good of a swimmer the students here have spent nearly their entire lives waist deep in water. In reality, many struggle with the swim test. Some students may have to retest because of an error, some students may consider transferring to another school for their senior year, and some haven’t had the time to learn how to swim.

Yes, learning to swim could one day save your life. Encouraging students to take part in school provided swimming lessons is no doubt beneficial. But requiring a swim test as a graduation requirement puts unnecessary pressure and attention on those who can’t swim. Without the ever-looming threat of a swimming day of reckoning, maybe students could let their guard down, be honest about their abilities and get the help they need.

Sink or swim?

Students have no choice

BY MICHELLE FOLEY

As CHS seniors envision post-graduation life, past students are already living it, with many pursuing service-based educational and career pathways.

2019 grad Colleen Lang studied at Arena Pacífico University to become an Army or Air Force nurse through her participation in the Reserve Officers’ Training Corps. Though quick to list the program’s benefits, including post-graduation career opportunities, academic scholarships and grants, Lang encourages prospective ROTC members to understand exactly what the lifestyle entails.

“Do your research,” she says, explaining that balancing studies with training has challenged her peers, demanding a robust work ethic and strong time management skills. “It definitely builds character.” We’ve all changed, grown even over the course of one semester.

Another 2019 grad, Claudio Montero gives nearly identical advice as an engineering student and ROTC member at California State University Maritime Academy: “I thought Cal Maritime would be a good place for me to get a leg up on the competition who are also trying to get into the Navy and to embrace the lifestyle that I’ll be a part of for a long time.”

That lifestyle involves crisp uniforms, rigorous naval training and a 20-unit academic course load. To commission as a naval officer after graduation, he balances engineering, calculus and naval science classes with weekly trips south for naval training at the University of California, Berkeley.

2019 CHS grad Kurt Brophy (right) enjoys the annual Army-Navy football game between the Naval Academy and the Military Academy with roommates Jordan Blair and Dylan Blake.

2017 grad Parker White holds similar plans for the future. After two years as an ROTC cadet at Texas A&M University, he will take a gap year with plans to transfer to CU Boulder in the coming fall. After graduation, he will commission as a second lieutenant in the U.S. military. White was partially motivated to pursue ROTC for its scholarship opportunities. Taking classes in Arabic, a “defensive language” according to the United States Department of Defense, covered all of his expenses and allowed him to spend ten weeks in Morocco the summer after freshman year to study the language.

After experiencing bullying as a child, White began to see service as a way to achieve self-defense and strength.

“It had been in my head for so long that I didn’t see myself doing anything else,” he says.

Though White originally planned to enlist as a soldier immediately after graduating high school, his family encouraged him to take the officer’s course.

The path to service has been a bit different for 2019 grad Kurt Brophy, a U.S. Naval Academy freshman and 2018 grad Nathan Suess, U.S. Air Force Academy sophomore. After graduation, both will graduate debt-free and commission as officers in their respective ROTC programs.

CAMPUS

CUSD updates visitor check-in procedure

BY KEA YENGST

At the start of the new semester, Carmel High School initiated the use of the Raptor Visitor Management system, a machine that scans each visitor’s background for possible felonies or sex offenses prior to visitation.

Assistant principal Debbi Puente thinks this new policy for visitors has the background that was given over to visit the campus, they still have to check in with me, but they can check themselves in with Raptor.”

This procedure is intended to prevent sex offenders from coming onto campus. Although there have been no reported occurrences, the visitor regulation is required to scan all visitors for potential threats.

Assistant principal Debby Puente thinks this new policy for visitors is a way to improve campus security.

“It’s a great way for us to know who’s on campus,” Puente says. “It helps us make sure that the campus stays safe.”

When visitors check in, they are given a sticker name tag that has their ID photo, what room they are visiting and the time of their check-in. Prior to the use of Raptor, a physical roster had to be handled in with the time they checked in and checked out.

“The more familiar we get with it, the happier I am,” Berry says. “I don’t have to stop and pull out the book. If I want to know where a person is going and they don’t tell me, I can look on my computer right away.”

Previously, there had been no database of who exactly was on campus.

“We asked [visitors] to check in,” Puente says. “But we didn’t have the background that was given with this new machine. It looks for several things, like a record of any kind.”

Yet social studies teacher Bill Schrier has frequent visitors to his classes and questions the new office addition.

“I think that keeping students safe is always a good idea,” Schrier says. “I just don’t know that this is the way to accomplish it and that it may be too heavy-handed.”

Meanwhile, social studies teacher Nora Ward is on board with this new safety measure.

“It’s really helpful during school hours,” Ward says. “All the [visitors] have to do is swipe through the school’s system. I have four people who regularly come in for clubs, a panel that comes in and two people that come in for economics.”

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Photo by KEA YENGST

Each visitor is required by law to wear a valid RAPTOR name tag each time they go on a public school campus.

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BY RILEY PALSHAW

ATHLETICS

Cristina Borek takes on varsity softball coaching job

BY RILEY PALSHAW

After the departure of varsity softball coach Jim Pingree, who led the Padres to two league titles in the past three years, Carmel High School has hired Cristina Borek, a 2008 CHS alumna and registered nurse who excelled at the varsity level in high school and went on to play four years at North Dakota State.

“It’s just a really great group of girls, and I’m excited and privileged to be their coach,” Borek says.

Pingree announced his departure at the end of the 2019 season after the team finished first in the Mission Division of the Pacific Coast Athletic League with a 13-2 league record. The Padres progressed to the quarterfinals of the CCS Division II playoffs, where they lost to Aptos.

This season Borek hopes to use her knowledge of the game to continue to improve the program after coaching the JV team for three seasons and assisting it last year. She has also assisted a varsity team at Moorhead High School in Moorhead, Minnesota.

“We were looking for someone who was going to continue to lead our program in a positive way because the program’s been in a really good place,” athletic director Golden Anderson says. “Coach Pingree did a really good job and made his staff in place, and student-athletes had a good time and were enjoying their experience and we want that to continue.”

Borek has been asking for the players’ input on aspects of the program and what they want Carmel softball to be.

“I want them to be the best that they can be out here,” she says. “I’m going to provide the structure needed for them, but it’s their decision in the end.”

The players have caught on to Borek’s methods and are enjoying the fact that their wishes are being acknowledged.

“Just from the preseason meetings and the workouts I’ve been to, Cristina has seemed like she really cares about the girls and actually wants to take into account our preferences,” says senior Kendra Hyles, who led the Padres in almost every offensive category and was one of the first to raise his hand whenever bodily fluids are found on the field.

Borek, who’s served as the Sports Medicine director of transportation and facilities Dan Paul.

“Any transfer of bacteria can lead to infections, although proper hygiene can reduce the risk,” says Paul, who emphasizes that the district grounds crew and custodial staff follows guidelines set by the Synthetic Turf Council and TurfField, the manufacturer of CHS’s synthetic field.

In terms of maintenance on the football field, there are no district-wide regulations or rules. Following those guidelines includes conducting weekly maintenance on the field with a grooming machine, inspections for any issues that may cause problems and cooperation with the manufacturer when necessary.

A cleaning chemical isn’t used to disinfect the entire field on a regular basis, but instead used to spot-clean whenever bodily fluids are found on the field.

“We’re certainly keeping an eye on it and we want to make sure we keep the facilities clean by meeting with the custodial staff on a regular basis,” Lyons says. “When these things start to pop up, we have to become extra fastidious in our areas that are high traffic areas; that means weight rooms, locker rooms, and especially public facilities.”

The winter season wraps up and students transition back toward the outdoors for spring sports, cases of infections won’t be forgotten as a possible concern for CHS administration and athletes alike.

“I believe it’s super important because it ups the expectations of the younger girls to be at practice with varsity players, and it brings their level up,” Borek says.

Younger players are going to need to raise their level of play with the graduation of Jessica Pavloff, the All-County senior pitcher who gathered 100 strikeouts in 105 innings last season.

“It’s always hard to lose a senior pitcher that had such a successful season prior,” Borek says. “It’s going to mean a lot of learning opportunities for some of the younger players and a lot of opportunities for them to show up and live up to those expectations.”

Assisting Borek is Jordan D’Aurio, who played softball at Nichols College, and Sierra Alvarez, a CHS graduate who coached field hockey at Stevenson High School.

Even though the assistant coaches are new to Carmel softball, Borek has been around this program for years and has already bonded with and earned the respect of many of the girls.

“If I met Coach Cristina last season I have always thought very highly of her,” says sophomore Mary Cardinalli, who played on the JV team last year.

“She is a very experienced coach and it shows.”

The team is currently preparing for their first game which will take place March 3 at San Lorenzo Valley.

“(Cristina’s) vision for the girls will lead them to not only become great softball players,” says D’Aurio, “but grow and mature into amazing young women who can take on anything they set their minds to.”

Field health risk cont. from 1

important to keep the wound covered and discuss sanitation of facilities. The issue of staph and MRSA infections spreading among students at schools isn’t uncommon, either. In the past 10 years, multiple cases of high school and college student-athletes have surfaced regarding infections stemming from two major factors: cosmetic body shaving and turf burns. In a recent 2015 case, a Kentucky high school sued his high school after being infected with MRSA, according to reports from the Safe Healthy Playing Fields Coalition.

While CUSD nurse Debra Taylor wouldn’t confirm details regarding cases in the 2019-20 school year for confidentiality purposes, Taylor was able to confirm multiple students came down with infections and multiple were student-athletes.

“The football field could have been a factor in the case of any student who had played on the field,” notes Taylor, confirming that other students she saw were not playing football during the 2019-20 season.

Both Borek and Anderson say that students often come down with a higher level of injuries and infections towards the beginning of the winter season. This time, according to Borek, a student transitioning out of the football program had developed MRSA.

The infections prompted conversations among administration and the CHS varsity softball program.

Borek was one of the first to raise his concerns about the cases sports medicine had been seeing, which eventually led to health reports issued to Lyons and Anderson.

“We can’t be 100 percent positive if it was our turf that caused the problems, but the fact that we had multiple students coming in meant that we needed to look back at what we’ve been doing,” says Borek, who’s served as the Sports Med teacher for 13 years and spends hundreds of hours on the football field throughout the year.

In mid-November, the teacher contacted administration and the director of transportation and facilities D’Aurio.

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As the winter season wraps up and students transition back toward the outdoors for spring sports, cases of infections won’t be forgotten as a possible concern for CHS administration and athletes alike.

Benches of Carmel cont. from 4

out an annual award at CHS’ track and field banquet in Ryan’s name or by educating teenagers about the dangers of drivers drinking.

Visitors to Ryan’s bench may also notice a laminated card called Ryan’s Wish, a short passage which describes who he was—it was read at CHS’ graduation of the Class of 2007. In the cement stands on either side of the bench, there are seven heart-shaped rocks that Ryan collected for his mother on Carmel Beach after surf sessions.

“I met so many wonderful people down there, and it just brings me such hope and it gives me peace to know that these people are sitting on my son’s bench,” Field explains. “I like to tell the story to people. It reminds people of how short life can be, to live in the moment more and to appreciate what they have. It means a lot to me.”

As assistant planner for the City of Carmel, Catherine Tavone helps families like Field’s to navigate the process of acquiring a bench, sharing what her work means to her: “It’s a place where families can take on the things, especially those who [recently constructed] bench locations along the ocean,” says of Stuntz’s and Brunn’s benches. “It’s very meaningful and introspective. It’s meant a lot to me to help individuals make that a reality. It’s one of the fulfilling parts of the job.”

Carmel residents can apply to build a bench or to place a plaque on an existing one put in by the City of Carmel. Those who choose to build a new bench have to cover all the costs themselves. Since it started many decades ago, Carmel’s unique tradition of commemorating benches along Scenic Avenue will likely continue for decades to come, as people will always look for ways to remember and honor loved ones who’ve left their mark.

You can donate online to the Braxton Stuntz Foundation at his GoFundMe page or sign up for updates on his webpage, braxtonstuntzfoundation.org.

Those interested in acquiring a new bench or a plaque can visit Catherine Tavone at her office in Carmel’s City Hall on Monte Verde Street.
McGrath rejuvenates theater tech program

BY MICHAEL LAKIND

Remember the elaborate nature of Maraczeck’s Parfumerie in “She Loves Me” or the castle from “Spamalot”? Those designs were entirely planned and constructed by the students of Stagecraft past. While the Production course is currently a stand-alone college elective, it may be combined with Theater Design in a couple of years to function as two completely distinct semesters—if the program finds success. To align with the structure of a college course, a future version of Stagecraft may start with one semester of classroom learning and one semester of lab work. “Theater Design would be more academic because there’s a lecture component,” McGrath says. “It really gets into the more theoretical and fundamental approaches of lights, scenery, sound [and] costumes.”

McGrath, who previously taught theater tech classes at Hartnell College, is not alone in facing the chaos that comes with the complex CHS performing arts center building. The disproportionate lunch lines are the result of students about their frustrations,” Puente says.

“As long as I’ve been here, there have been freshmen that have cut in front of the upperclassmen who get there have been freshmen that have cut in front of the way in some cases, students cutting in line can cause chaos, we make sure a staff member is posted at each line location any time food is served,” CMS principal Dan McGrath says. “Especially at lunch when everybody’s cramming their food down, they’ve been waiting in line forever. The disproportionate lunch lines are the result of the variance of food inside and outside of the cafeteria. Students who want a certain lunch can not choose which line to stand in, which explains the lack of balance between the two lunch lines.

“The food in the cafeteria doesn’t have the same food as the outside of the cafeteria,” freshman Clare Cook adds.

“Right when the bell rings for lunch, kids go running to the lunch line,” junior Corina Thrasher says. “The lines are so long that you spend most of your lunch time waiting to get food.”

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BY MARTIN SEVCIK

Students stepping into Room 32 for the first time after winter break were introduced to Bruce Dini, a coach and teacher for over a decade, who will be teaching World History and Geography as Jillayne Ange’s replacement until the end of the 2019-20 school year.

“The kids have been great,” says Dini, who cites support from fellow staff and administration during the transition to his current position. “The students have been very gracious in welcoming me into their classroom.”

After 25 years in the business world, Dini enrolled in a teaching education program. He worked at Stevenson for 10 years, teaching history, economics and leadership courses as well as serving as the head football coach. Dini coached lacrosse at Carmel High School from 2003 to 2009, and after earning his teaching credential, he worked as a substitute teacher at Carmel Middle School.

The substitute’s arrival coincides with the departure of Ange in December. The substitute is aware of the role he’s filling on campus; he mentions reading the Sandpiper’s article on Ange’s departure and being impressed by her status on campus.

“If I was just going through the motions, going, ‘Yeah I’m just the sub for history, here’s the agenda Mrs. Ange gave me,’ I think that would be disappointing to the kids,” says Marc Stafford, social studies department chair. “For somebody to do what he has to do, come in the middle of the year and replace a teacher that students loved, we couldn’t have asked for anyone better than Mr. Dini.”

While Dini will be following the same general topics and course structure as Ange, he has taught world history for years and hopes to bring some of his experience and original material to the course.

“It’s a balancing act,” the substitute says. “I want to respect the work that Mrs. Ange and the kids have done, but at the same time ask myself, ‘What can I bring to the course?’” For example, Dini intends to do more work with primary source documents, especially in areas like U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East.

After decades as a career businessman, Dini decided to pursue a career as a teacher.

“When I first was questioning whether I should teach as a career, I was coaching at Carmel,” Dini says. “Then Principal Karl Pallastrini encouraged me to get a teaching credential, which was hard to do later in life.”

“She pointed me in the direction to pursue that with every ounce of your being,” Dini says. “When I got my teaching credential, I was like, ‘Okay, I’ve got my teaching credential. What’s next?’”

After 25 years in the business world, Dini decided to pursue a career as a teacher.

“Then Principal Karl Pallastrini encouraged me to get a teaching credential, which was hard to do later in life.”

Luckily for Dini, he feels he made the right choice. He enjoys teaching and coaching immensely, and he says he plans to continue doing so for as long as he can.

Military track cont. from 12

The financial benefits don’t tip the scale for these students on their own. CHS guidance counselor Darren Johnston says that between one and four Carmel High students choose a service-related path after high school annually, with most motivated by more than just finances.

Growing up with a naval background, Brophy says he serves through a desire to help others as a future naval officer and a member of what he calls “the world’s ocean police force.”

“No matter what kind of community you go into, whether it be pilot, marine or submarine ship driver, you’re doing some kind of action to help people,” Brophy says. “You could be an aircraft pilot dropping bombs on terrorist groups or you could be in a surface warfare ship bringing supplies to a devastated country after a tsunami.”

Suess, who plans to pursue a service-based career in civil engineering, says the Air Force Academy offers a unique culture and opportunities for self-improvement, community and career.

“It’s a grind,” Suess says. “If you don’t want a military life, then don’t go for it. If you do, there’s no better place.”

For future midshipmen, cadets, soldiers, pilots and nurses, the journey has been one of passion and commitment. As CHS seniors approach graduation, a pathway into service may be on the horizon for a few.

“Just work your ass off, get in good shape, research what you want to do and pursue that with every ounce of your being,” Claudio Montero advises prospective plebes.

“God willing, it’ll work out.”
Many forget that high school is more than academics, athletics and extracurriculars. The hallways are more than paths between classes and the community offers more than just busy people leading busy lives. Carmel High School is where many kids discover passion, their future plans and love.

“Chemistry from the Start”

Lada moved from Los Angeles her freshman year. She was starting her sophomore year when she was walking down the science wing hallway with books in hand. Bret, a junior, stopped Lada to compliment her folder which was covered in popular '80s bands.

“The folder was just an excuse,” Bret explains. “At first glance, I thought she was amazing.”

Bret later asked her to the Homecoming dance.

“We were friends,” reflects Lada. “He would give me a ride home every day. We would hangout, laugh, go to the beach, meet up during lunch...but just as friends.”

Although they remained strictly friends throughout their first three years at CHS, there was always a spark. Lada remembers always having chemistry, but never acting on it until time began to run out in the second semester of Bret’s senior year. Their friendship shifted toward a relationship, but was put to a stop when Bret left for San Diego after graduation.

“We would write letters,” says Lada. “I still have those love letters.”

Lada and Bret got married and moved back to Carmel. They have two children, Cole and Bianca, who both attend CHS.

“Little League to Longtime Love”

Craig and Mindy Cox met at Larson Field playing on the same Little League team. At that time, they were in elementary school.

After a year of separation, due to Craig’s fifth grade promotion, the two began what would be their first and only love as Mindy entered the sixth grade. The CMS hallways were home to the pair’s first glimpses of their future.

The Sadie Hawkins dance presented Mindy the opportunity to ask a boy. But Mindy didn’t choose Craig. Her best friend did. Thankfully, the girls “innocently switched dates” during the dance, according to Mindy.

Once in high school together, they dated off and on.

“Suddenly, life got put into perspective in a big way,” Mindy says. “I moved home. We realized what was important.” They decided to live together, buy a house, get puppies and, finally, get married!

Craig and Mindy have two daughters, Quinci and Teagan, who currently attend CHS.

“Overflowing with Love”

It was storm season. Mudslide marks that covered the Santa Lucia Mountains could be seen from Carmel Valley Road and the river was overflowing. Mike Kelly drove over to investigate.

“Nicole was there,” recalls Mike. “And it dawned on me, ‘Why hadn’t I asked her on a date yet?’”

That was in 1983. Prom was approaching, and Mike saw it as the perfect excuse to ask Nicole out. He mustered up the courage, but Nicole had previously committed to prom with another boy and asked for a rain check.

In shock that Mike had asked her on a date, Nicole went to have dinner at the Kelly residence.

“In was so excited after that night, literally jumping up and down. I couldn’t believe it,” recalls Nicole. “I was immediately in love. He was Mike Kelly and a jock and so cute.”

The pair dated their junior and senior years of high school, as well as through college, Mike at Berkeley and Nicole in Santa Barbara.

After college, they separated for almost 10 years, never thinking they would get back together.

The time they spent apart allowed them both to realize just how special being with someone from home really is.

“I think I knew all along,” says Mike. “I could never see myself with anyone else.”

Around 1998, Nicole and Mike met up again, went on a few dates, and the rest is history.

“It just felt right,” says Nicole. “He felt like home.”

The pair got married in 2000 and had three children, Nick, Keegan and Peyton.

“Thank you, Mrs. Walch!”

English teacher Norma Walch sat Aly directly in front of Jerry Kurz second semester of their senior year, circa 1987. Aly, giddy with schoolgirl excitement, noticed he was cute right away. During class, Aly would play with her hair designing intricate French braids to “avoid class time.” Jerry would notice but never comment, until one day when he whispered “wow” directly into her ear.

“I’ll never forget it,” says Aly.

Jerry asked her to prom, and they spent the rest of their senior year as a couple, spending weekends and summer days at the Kurz family ranch in King City, never expecting it to be more than short-term high school fling. They went their separate ways, as Jerry attended Cal Poly and Aly went to Sierra City College.

Flash forward 10 years, and Aly and Jerry were both back in Carmel Valley.

“My friends and I had gone out and one of them was like, ‘Well you know...Jerry’s single and home and you’re single and home...’” recalls Aly.

It took some convincing from her friend, but Aly agreed to give the Kurz residence a call.

“I had three of my buddies sleeping on the floor as the answering machine came on, at probably one in the morning,” Jerry explains. “I heard a girl’s voice, but didn’t recognize it until Aly’s voice came on. I picked it up and told her we should probably talk in the morning.”

Within two weeks, they went on their second first date, and it all fell back into place. Aly and Jerry got married in 2001 and had two children, Julia and Samantha, who currently attend CHS.
This year’s inevitable Oscars predictions: prepare for disappointment

BY MARTIN SEVCIK

This was the year of Adam Driver: He was in four feature films this year, and his best work was undoubtedly in “Marriage Story,” where Driver portrays a director and father going through a divorce, which begins benign, but ends on difficult terms. The problem is that he’s so terribly mundane—he’s certainly good, but he usually feels like a random person pulled off the street. It would be a mistake if he were to win.

Leonardo DiCaprio should be earning his second Academy Award this year. He no longer has his notorious losing streak, which makes a win here far less likely, but his performance in “Once Upon a Time... in Hollywood,” a nostalgic and historically inaccurate romp at the tail end of Hollywood’s Golden Age, is excellent. His portrayal of a down-and-out actor in the middle of a changing film industry felt totally genuine. Maybe it hit a little close to home. How will win? Joaquin Phoenix. He got the Golden Globe, and, for Phoenix, it’s been a long time coming. The Academy loved “Joker”—11 nominations—and a large part of the film’s appeal was Phoenix’s portrayal of the titular character, a mentally unstable comedian who plays a jaded journalist through a personal crisis in the film, which allows a far more intimate and personal side of Fred Rogers to emerge. In many biopics, it feels like a well-known actor is trying to replicate the voice and mannerisms of another famous individual; instead, it felt as if Mr. Rogers was reborn for the modern screen. There are few feats quite as impressive as that.

Who really cares anymore? I mean, seriously. The Oscars are the ultimate show of Hollywood pedantry which never amounts to anything. Ricky Gervais made waves with his Golden Globes monologue calling out Hollywood for the corrupt, soulless entity it is, yet little tangible change has occurred since.

It seemed for a few years that Hollywood might undergo change, that underrepresented groups would get a shot in the spotlight. That clearly didn’t happen this year, despite #MeToo, despite the incredible turnout of women on the technical side of the camera, and despite the amazing work of underrepresented groups this year. The Oscars didn’t change, nor do they seem to want to change. The disconnect between the actual industry and what’s represented at the award shows has never been greater.

“The Irishman” will probably win best picture. Catch the awards show Feb. 9.
Selena Gomez emerges with exceptionally “Rare” album

BY KEA YENGST

After a five-year hiatus since her last album release back in 2015, the 27-year-old pop artist has emerged back into the public eye with a new album “Rare,” a perfect way to start off music in the new decade.

In the early 2000s, pop artist Selena Gomez emerged into the public eye as a Disney Channel actor, and she has become a world-renowned icon for pop music. With hits like “Bad Liar” and “The Heart Wants What It Wants,” it was inevitable that Gomez was going to take off in the music industry.

The album opens with its first track of the same name, which talks about Gomez’s self-proclaimed uniqueness, especially with lyrics “It feels like you don’t care, why don’t you recognize I’m so rare?” She even throws some shade at her exes, like Justin Bieber and The Weeknd, and how they were not as affectionate for her, singing, “But I know that I’m special, and I’ll bet there’s somebody else out there to tell me I’m rare.”

One constant pattern throughout the album is the fact that Gomez gives mixed messages in all of her songs, which makes the overall theme of the album as a whole a bit confusing. The messages she tries constantly tries to blend together are shedding her past relationships and feeling comfortable in her own skin.

While “Rare” samples two different themes at once, “Lose You to Love Me” focuses more on the reality that one should love oneself for who they are and that they should not be dependent on someone else to live their best life. Unlike “Rare,” which contains a more fast-paced beat, “Lose You to Love Me” is a slower beat that focuses more on vocals and an overall message of finding one’s self without the help of anybody else, especially with explicitly stating in both pre-choruses, “We always go into it blindly, I needed to lose you to find me.” There are even some piano instrumentals and voice overlapping found within the track, which adds to the emotional theme.

“Rare” is definitely an album the public has been waiting for since 2015. With its unique and diverse array of musical styles, the 41-minute masterpiece deserves a 9/10.

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Question and Answer

1. Could you live without the internet?
2. Surprising hobby?
3. Favorite decade to live in?
4. What’s your greatest pet peeve?
5. What’s the best sound in the world?

Vincent Colon
sophomore
1. Yes I hope so.
2. No
3. 2010s
4. People who talk in an American accent, but for certain words in a different language, they’ll use the native accent of that word
5. Delphin

Brayden Prehn
senior
1. Yeah I think so.
2. Photography
3. 2050s. I think living in the future would be really cool.
4. People chewing with their mouth open
5. When the music is really loud in your car and all your friends are singing along

Addie Crabbe
sophomore
1. No
2. I like woodshop.
3. ‘70s or early 2000s
4. When people say, “Can I try it?”, when they’ve already tried, but they just really want some
5. A golf ball rolling in the golf hole

Xander Selby-Lara
junior
1. Yes
2. Not really.
3. ‘80s because there’s no polio
4. People thinking that they’re funnier than they actually are
5. A bass drop, but the bass is excessively higher and breaks your ears

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Director of Outpatient Department at Community Hospital of the Monterey Peninsula
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ENROLL ONLINE TODAY!
Horoscopes
Aries: March 20 - April 20
Instead of spending all of your energy trying to fix your toxic relationships, just give up entirely on the people you don’t like. These include your relationships with fast food and the internet. Just walk away.
Taurus: April 21 - May 20
Despite the technical beginning and ending of the seasons, no one on the planet seems to know when spring actually begins. I’m just going to assume that the spring season starts now, which means you can blame all that crying you do on allergies.
Gemini: May 21 - June 21
As a Gemini, your natural instinct is to look for danger in every situation you encounter. The spring season is going to be all about being constantly on your guard and ready to fight, regardless of the circumstances. Don’t be afraid to get physical!
Cancer: June 22 - July 22
All anyone ever wants to talk about recently is clowns, but I think we should all pay more attention to our local jesters. A jester, a.k.a. a historical performer, is much more reputable than these foolish clown ilk. Try to embrace your inner jester throughout the spring season.
Leo: July 23 - Aug. 22
Your unhealthy patterns are rooted in your home and family. Try carrying some sage around your house, or just burning the house down and moving to a new continent. It’s all about the energy!
Virgo: Aug. 23 - Sept. 22
Instead of looking for validation from your romantic interests and those who surround you, try to find validation through yourself, even though you spend all of your time scrolling through memes. Good luck with that.
Libra: Sept. 23 - Oct. 22
Emulate your local mushroom or starfish this month—slow in your endeavors but intentional.
Scorpio: Oct. 23 - Nov. 21
All of the unnecessary things that you’re holding onto for “sentimental” reasons or for ornamental purposes need to go. Grab four trash bags and fill them.
Sagittarius: Nov. 22 - Dec. 21
Things you don’t need this month: more pos-sessions. Things you do need this month: some therapy. Perhaps a savings account.
Capricorn: Dec. 22 - Jan. 19
Since you clearly need attention from all of your peers, try starting a new cult or religion centered on yourself, commit some crimes on the way and then get Netflix to produce about yourself. Update your Wikipedia page.
Aquarius: Jan. 20 - Feb. 18
Some people will tell you to do more listening than talking, but those are the people who just want to talk more and have a captive audience. Don’t fall for other people’s advice, unless it’s from me.
Pisces: Feb. 19 - March 20
You are not the protagonist of a young adult novel, do you hear me? Now is not the time to dye your hair pink or to come up with some quirky interest that makes you unique. Now is the time to get a job, figure out how to file your taxes and create a plan for paying off your student debt. One cannot pay off one’s loans by being quirkiest than everyone else.

PHILOSOPHICAL MINUTE
Is there a self?
Most philosophers would define the self as the common folk would define the soul: an independent and unified entity within a body that exceeds tangible adjectives. It’s that one metaphysical definition that fully encapsulates the nature of an individual.
In a conversation about the self, it is essential to make mention of the great Scottish philosopher David Hume. He—being an atheist-determinism-empiricist—felt that the self doesn’t exist. There is no need for it to exist, he says, and it can be rationalized away. All of man’s actions can be fully accounted for in a computational input-output model. To Hume, each of us as individuals is truly no more important than a potato. Whether this is good or bad, Hume sees humans as consistently acting on emotional impulse rather than composed rationalism.
Now, as someone who lives in a household that largely, vocally and axiomatically concedes the teachings of David Hume, I was prompted to question it as I was lying in bed thinking about it, a curious notion propped itself into my head: What prompts that alienation we feel from ourselves after exhausting a base hedonism?
Take an example: Have you ever stayed up, watching the newest season of “Bojack Horseman on Netflix at the break of dawn, in bed?” And has it happened to you that, after the end of an episode, you see your slouched and unceremonious figure reflected back at you on the black screen, and have wondered at what terrible low you’ve sunk to?
Is this a version of a biological response not a consequence of the self, for what else can set your own emotions against the action that you are biologically supposed to carry out (seeking dopamine reward), except for a separate entity that also commandeers your body’s thoughts and behaviors (i.e., a self)?
Alas, there is still a strong counter to this analysis. The voice that strikes you when facing what actions your body has committed can be understood as a reflection of your society’s expectations, also included in the Hume model. Such disgust at one’s self for what terrible low you’ve sunk to?
This is a version of a biological response not a consequence of the self, for what else can set your own emotions against the action that you are biologically supposed to carry out (seeking dopamine reward), except for a separate entity that also commandeers your body’s thoughts and behaviors (i.e., a self)?

ANT RANT
BY MIA KOTELEC
As I sit in my third period AP Gov-ernment class, I should be focused on understanding the complexities and nuances of our nation’s political landscape, but instead, paralyzed by both fear and awe, I watch prostrate as a Jack-son Pollock painting composed of ants forms on the wall next to me. Every morning, I helplessly observe as an army of ants haphazardly wreaks havoc, causing chaos to the same degree as the Mongol invasions.
The nanosized demons have taken over. Chromebooks infested. Lockers devastated. In the girls’ bathroom, the trash cans purely func-tion as a portal from which ants are spawned and emerge.
If I didn’t know better, I would think Pixar is using CHS as the set for “A Bug’s Life.” It’s goten to the point where I can’t differentiate between our school’s luxurious classroom carpeting and the ceaselessly shifting black shadow of vargeulous insects that coats every single surface imaginable.
Since the tried and true tactic of using good of’ Raid is apparently not a viable option on cam-pus, I have a couple of proposals:
I suggest that the best way to end the arthro-
pods’ reign of terror is to attack from the inside. If we train a select few of the more loyal ants, we can create a covert operations squad (led by Ulysses S. Ant) that could acquire crucial infor-mation regarding the dark ants’ next attack and destroy their corrupt ant government.
For our next plan of attack, in the words of Donald Trump, “It’s time we think about border security.” At this point there are so many ants that it’s only logical to assume that only so many of them are local. With CHS’ incredible scenery, cafeteria delicacies and spirited environment, it’s no surprise that so many ants are migrating here for better opportunities. We can strengthen our borders by lining our campus with a combi-nation of mint and lemon juice.
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The local ant economies of Stevenson, Pacific Grove and York could all benefit from the economic stimulation the immi-gration would bring, thus alleviating the burden from our school while helping our neighbors.
The time is now! We need to act fast! In the community-oriented spirit of CHS, it’s time to give the gift that keeps on giving: Ants!