



BHS students craft handmade gifts for loved ones

From woodworking, to baking to plants, explore the handmade presents students have gifted to family and friends over the holidays. [PAGE 11](#)



TikTok ban likely to take effect on Jan. 19

Concerns over the Chinese government using TikTok to access private user data led to the passing of a TikTok ban which will force a slow degeneration of the app. [PAGE 13](#)

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INVESTIGATIVE

TEACHER RETENTION RATES



DAMON HUNT
staff writer

“I thought about quitting everyday my first year,” Bill Pratt, longtime Berkeley High School teacher, said. Similar to many teachers across the nation, Pratt’s struggles included lack of financial compensation, burnout, and social underappreciation. Pratt has taught at BHS for 31 years, is the co-founder of the Communication Arts and Sciences small school, and was formerly the district coordinator for the Beginning Teacher and Support Program, now the Berkeley Schools Excellence Program (BSEP).

According to a survey conducted from 2020 to 2024 by Statista, in August of 2024, roughly 79,000 teachers in the U. S. quit their

jobs. This trend is reflected nationally, according to a study conducted by Richard Ingersoll of the University of Pennsylvania’s Graduate School of Education, 44 percent of all teachers nationwide quit within their first five years of teaching. According to educators of BHS, these alarming levels of teacher turnover are present in the United States for a multitude of reasons.

Pratt explained that lack of financial compensation for the amount of skill and time required for educational occupations is a substantial contributing factor. “Fundamentally, teachers have to be paid more ... most of us have masters degrees, and many of us have training beyond that, and so for people with an equivalent level of education and training, the salaries [PAGE 8](#)

ILLUSTRATIONS BY CARINA NOTTINGHAM LAYOUT BY JOSEPHINE MORASKY

ENTERTAINMENT

African Diaspora dance takes center stage

BY ZOE DILWORTH
staff writer

On Friday, Dec. 13th, 2024, the Berkeley High School Community Theater was a vibrant pocket of warmth as students, families, teachers, and alumni alike all gathered to watch the African Diaspora Dance

and Drum Winter Showcase. The African Diaspora Dance shows always draw in a large, lively crowd, but the turnout this time around was particularly grand, and it did not go unnoticed by the talented performers. “The audience was bigger than I thought, and backstage everyone was hyping each other up and it helped

me feel confident,” BHS freshman Khephiri Watson-Martin said, “The audience was more interactive than I thought, and they joined in on our chants and songs.” Each year, the performance is built around a central theme. This year’s show was titled “Joxe Xam Xam,” which is a phrase in Wolof,

a language spoken in Senegal and Gambia. “Joxe Xam Xam” means to share or pass down knowledge, and the theme was seen both in the dances and the whole show. Building on knowledge was at the heart of every step leading up to the production. The whole process is an exchange between the students and [PAGE 12](#)



Dancers perform in Community Theater on Dec. 13, 2024. **JAHAN INGRAHAM**

BHS serves community through annual holiday meal on Dec. 14

BY NATALIE GROSS
staff writer

As the holiday season arrived in Berkeley, the school's annual holiday meal once again brought together students, staff, and local residents for a day of warmth and community. Held in the school cafeteria on Saturday, Dec. 14, 2024, the event featured volunteers from different school programs like the cheer team, leadership, and also anyone who wanted to sign up. The volunteers helped by serving meals, sharing stories, and playing music.

Sophia Nishioka, a BHS junior, reflected on her experience as a volunteer. "I volunteered last year, and I really liked it," she said, "I also volunteer at Dorothy Day House, so I just, I really like to volunteer. I like to chat with people." Nishioka took on a leadership role this year,

emphasizing how the event helped her feel more connected to the community. "It's nice to meet people and then see them later and chat with them," she said.

Nathalia Velasquez, a BHS sophomore, shared similar sentiments. "Here at Berkeley High (School) this is my first event, but back in South America, we used to do charity work for people that didn't have enough resources," she explained. Velasquez appreciated the strong sense of community in Berkeley. "I love how kind and generous people are. They just want to help you and don't ask for anything in return," she said.

The event wasn't just about serving food; it was about fostering connections, according to Danny Raymond Sylvester. Sylvester was a participant in the holiday meal and a Berke-

ley High School alumnus, and described the event's impact on him. "It feels like home," he said, "I love (BHS), and it's great to see the community come together like this."

Volunteers played a crucial role in making the event a success. Kylie Chew, a BHS

counted a memorable moment with a participant named Darryl. "He told me about his son, who had medical issues when he was born but is now thriving. We sang carols together, and it was really bonding," she said.

The event's impact extended beyond the day itself. Volunteers like Nishioka and Velasquez hoped that the sense of giving and community would inspire others to volunteer year-round. "It's important to be consistent because that's how we make change," Nishioka said.

The organization of this event had its challenges. "I feel like there's a lot of organization and trying to wrangle a lot of people and just timing is always tough. (Also) trying to advertise and get everything done, and get donations," Chew said. Despite these ob-

stacles, the volunteers' dedication ensured that everything ran smoothly.

For those interested in participating in future events, the advice is to be open and ready to help. "I'd say go for it. Be open to meeting new people and don't be afraid to step out of your comfort zone. It's a rewarding experience,"

Chew said.

As the event concluded, the sentiment shared by all was one of gratitude and community spirit. The annual holiday meal at BHS wasn't just about the food but about coming together, sharing experiences, and building a stronger, more connected community.

"It's great to see the community come together like this."

Danny Raymond Sylvester
BHS Alumnus

junior and another student volunteer, highlighted the event's role in strengthening community bonds. "The holiday meal brings people from all over the city together," she said, "It's a great way to connect with people you wouldn't usually meet."

The stories and experiences shared by those attending were heartwarming. Nishioka re-



Volunteers serve food at the holiday meal.

IDA MARSHALL-LAPPE

Berkeley Free Clinic rebuilds after COVID, plans to move location

BY MILA BOYDEN
staff writer

The Berkeley Free Clinic is a non-profit volunteer-run organization based in Berkeley, California that provides healthcare to those in need without requiring money or insurance. Currently, the Berkeley Free Clinic is moving to a new location where they will continue to serve the Berkeley community.

Located on 2339 Durant Ave, Berkeley, CA, the clinic's

hours are four to eight p.m. on Sundays, six to 10 p.m. on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays, six to nine p.m. on Wednesdays, and 11 a.m. to two p.m. on Saturdays. The Berkeley Free Clinic initially provided 24/7 service when it was established in 1969, but later shortened its hours of service.

"I think the reality of life in the Bay Area is that finding volunteers who are available to staff something around the clock, even just during business hours is challenging," said

Finn Black, a nurse who has been volunteering at the clinic for 10 years. "So we only have the capacity to be open during the days during weekends or weekday evenings."

The Berkeley Free Clinic provides nine different healthcare services to its patients. These include an outreach team, TB skin tests, local resource navigation and referrals, health insurance and food benefits, peer counseling, STI screenings and treatment, UTI testing and treatment, eyeglass and vision screening, and

dental care.

The outreach team of the Berkeley Free Clinic also provides monthly medical outreach on the first Thursday of the month and roving medical outreach on the third Saturday. Services include pop-up flu shot clinics, foot care, wound care, hot meals, hygiene supplies, basic first-aid, rapid testing for HIV, Hepatitis C, and syphilis, and harm reduction. All of the Berkeley Free Clinics services allow drop-in patients except for their dental care service, which is limited in availability and by appointment only.

COVID-19 was a very challenging time for the organization. Due to COVID-19, the Berkeley Free Clinic was forced to decrease the number of provided services and funnel most of its resources into medical outreach programs. During this period, the clinic ended up closing all services in the main building due to the shelter in place order.

"COVID had a massive impact on us. When the shelter in place orders came down in April of 2020 we had this meeting to talk about what we were gonna do," Black ex-

plained, "We don't have great ventilation because we're in the basement of a church so we were not sure if we would be able to keep people safe, meaning our volunteers or our clients."

The clinic was still able to provide outreach services, despite the COVID-19 restrictions. The BFC clinic conducted outreach approximately six days a week during the first months of COVID-19, according to Black. The clinic also distributed hot meals to unhoused people, maintained hand washing stations at encampments, distributed tents, and provided drinking water.

After COVID-19, the clinic also faced challenges reopening due to a low number of returning volunteers. Many volunteers were suffering from burnout or had continued on their medical pathway during the COVID-19 years.

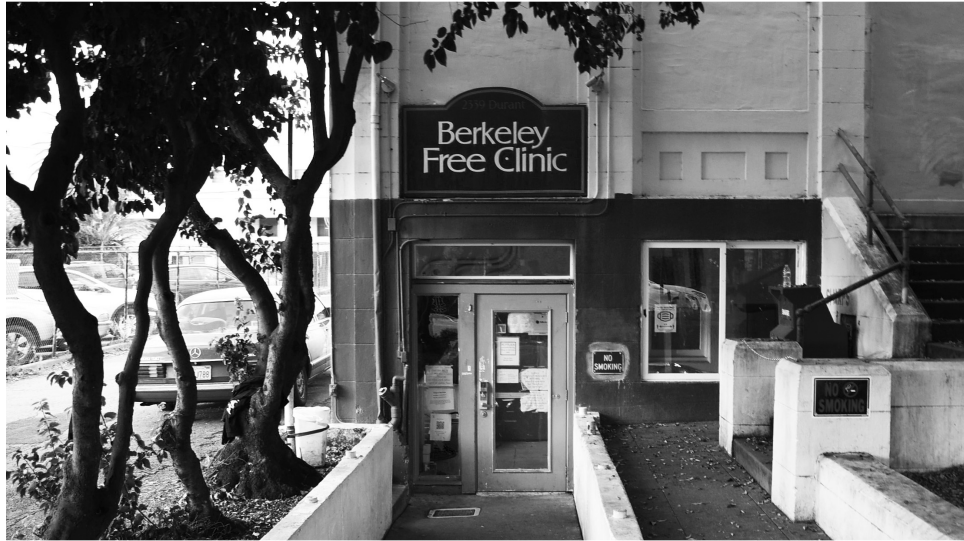
"The thing that ended up being really challenging for (the clinic) is that it took us a long time to organize volunteers to reopen the clinic once it shut down," Black said, "What's challenging about an organization like (the Berkeley Free Clinic) is that because

we're training people from scratch to do medical services which requires a pretty high degree of skill, there's this intense initial training commitment. So then we have a lot of turnover, we lose all that institutional knowledge and if there's not enough experienced volunteers around to train new people, it's hard to replace volunteers."

Currently, the Berkeley Free Clinic has made significant progress in returning to its normal, Pre-COVID-19 operations, although it has not yet fully returned to Pre-COVID-19 standards. The clinic is working on fundraising projects such as its Winter Blitz fundraiser and applying for a Climate and Health Grant Proposal.

"Our current goals for the year include a successful Winter Blitz clinic fundraiser. The only challenges are promotion and public outreach," said Jeff Hagedorn, a volunteer for the clinic who works in the Information Resource Collective (IRC).

The clinic is also working on moving out of its main building into a new one, located at 830 University Ave.



Berkeley Free Clinic is currently located on 2339 Durant Ave, Berkeley, CA.

SASHA BALASUBRAMANIAN

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Alliance Française hosts holiday market

BY OSCAR BALASUBRAMANIAN
staff writer

On Saturday, Dec. 14, 2024, the Alliance Française (AF) hosted a French Holiday market in Berkeley. The event was featured in the Berkeley High School bulletin, which invited students to attend. AF is an independent non-profit organization that aims to share the French language and culture. They do this through language courses, workshops, and cultural events such as this one.

This event was hosted in the Alliance Française de Berkeley, a small yellow Victorian house. An AF intern said, “We’ve done the marketing, all the advertising. We reached out to vendors, and we’ve reached out to a lot of the French community, and obviously, we’re hosting and we’ve done a lot of the organization, the decorating. But all the foods here are from local vendors who are French or French-inspired.”

Inside the house were a multitude of different tables. The event had a table selling classic French children’s books and French pastries.

There were also honey and chocolate vendors as well as soap stands and jewelry stands. In the backyard of the house, there was a food vendor, selling all sorts of French crepes with fillings ranging from Nutella to just plain sugar. Upstairs, there was a table where kids could do crafts such as drawing and paper cutouts.

“The El Cerrito high-school French honor society has been coming for four years to do crafts with students and children and adults. It’s a wonderful opportunity for the high school students to come and speak some French with native French speakers and to have fun with the children,” said Karina Tindle, a teacher from El Cerrito High School who was at the market.

Around 50 people attended the event, creating a joyful blend of different types of people. There were French families going there to see other French families, Berkeley folk just coming to enjoy French culture for the first time, and BHS students.

The executive director, Charlotte Attry, said, “It’s a tradition in France. We used to have a Christmas market

just before Christmas and we want once a year to open the house, for people who want to feel this vibe.”

French holiday or Christmas markets are markets that happen in many cities all over France such as Strasbourg and Lyon. These markets usually start at the end of November and go throughout the month of December. They typically run through the streets, featuring stands selling baked treats, handmade gifts, or serving mulled wine. This tradition dates all the way back to German cities in the 1400s. The earliest trace of French holiday mar-

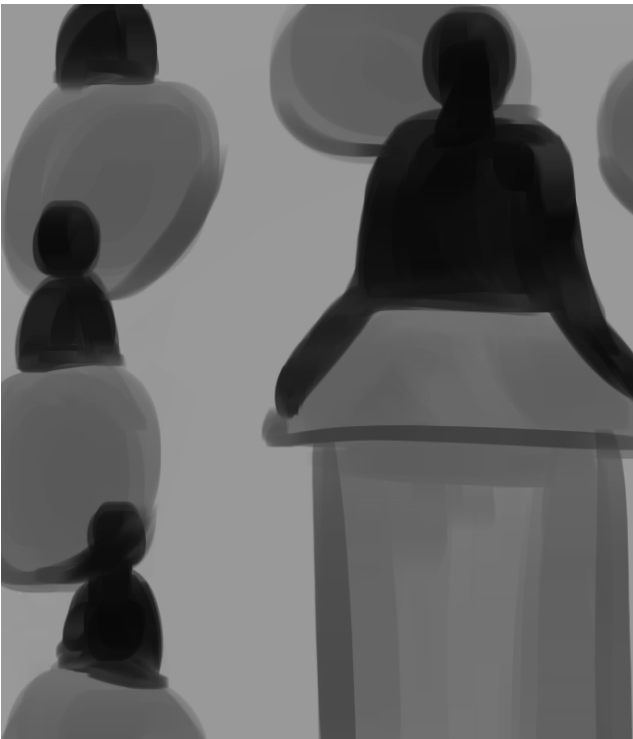
kets started in the region of Alsace in Strasbourg. Strasbourg, known as the “Capital of Christmas”, which still continues the tradition to this day.

Organizing the holiday market is very meaningful to members of Alliance Française. “I’ve been living in Berkeley for 10 years. And I love the idea (of sharing) my culture with people who live around, and, you know, share the spirit and personally also, I’m far from all my family, far from my friends. So I would say it’s also feeling the community in the same place,” Attry said.



Visitors browse vendors' items at the holiday market. ZOE KOHLMMEYER

School Board Meeting: Jen Corn and Ana Vasudeo sworn into BUSD School Board



IRIS LE LIBOUX

BY EVA KATZ
staff writer

The Berkeley Unified School District School Board meeting on Wednesday, Dec. 18, 2024, began by swearing in the newly elected school board director Jen Corn, and current director Ana Vasudeo.

“I would like to give a warm welcome to our new colleague, Jen Corn. I had the pleasure of getting to know (her) throughout the (school board) campaign and know that I have a true ally in protecting our diverse

student body including our queer, trans, immigrant, and undocumented students,” Vasudeo said.

Vasudeo was sworn in by Beatriz Leyva-Cutler, a former BUSD director and president, and Corn by Ty Alper, another former BUSD director and president.

Next, BUSD school board president Ka’Dijah Brown was sworn in by former director Laura Babitt. Mike Chang was sworn in as vice-president of the board, and Corn as the board clerk.

Superintendent Enikia Ford Morthel then discussed the Holiday Meal on Satur-

day, Dec. 14, 2024.

“200 plus volunteers and donors, including many students, stepped up and showed up for members of our unsheltered community. There were over 350 service hours put into this event,” Ford Morthel said. The annual Holiday Meal was held at Berkeley High School, with around 150 guests.

Ford Morthel added, “As we move further into the holiday season I wish each of you members of the Berkeley community all of the things that bring your hearts and souls delight. Lots of love, lots of joy, and lots of community.”

She then briefly mentioned her pride in the progress of the BUSD school board, “(The school board) continues to be enhanced by folks who are equally focused on equity, excellence, enrichment, and engagement.”

The meeting then moved into the public comment section. Tiera Brown, a graduate from Berkeley Technical Academy (BTA), and also the BTA student school board representative in the 2022-23 school year, spoke to advocate for the continuation of funding and support for College Bound, the African-American framework, and the continued support of students at BTA from BUSD.

Next, Sarah Cline, the

BHS Jazz Director and Corn’s wife, congratulated Corn and Vasudeo on their election.

“I’m confident that your wisdom, courage, vision, optimism, and dedication to Berkeley students, families, and community will benefit all of us,” Cline said.

Regina Chagolla, the vice president of the Berkeley Federation of Teachers, spoke on behalf of BUSD’s educators to welcome Corn into her role. Finally, Tamone Clay, a senior at BHS and a member of the Bridge program shared how the support he received helped him, along with 50 other Bridge students, in applying to universities.

During union comments, Berkeley Council of Classified Employees congratulated Brown, Chang, and Corn on their new positions, and honored a longtime employee of BUSD, Rodney, who has just retired after 41 years.

Afterward, Winta Clark, the BHS Student Representative, celebrated the African Diaspora dance and drum showcase on Friday, Dec. 13, 2024 held at BHS. “The performance was absolutely breathtaking. It showcased not just the incredible talent of our dancers, but also the richness and diversity of Afro-Haitian culture. The artistry, hard work, and dedication of everyone involved (was) evident,” said Clarke.

STUDY SKILLS: LEARNING STYLES

KAILEY ROBINSON



I’m sure most students have heard the idea that everyone learns differently, or how the way everyone attains information can be defined through specific learning styles. I knew that learning styles existed, but I was never actually sure what they were or where I fit in. I was inspired to write about this by a conversation I had recently. I was speaking with my friend and I mentioned that I planned to study after school to prepare for my upcoming math test. After I mentioned my plans to study, she revealed to me that she feels clueless when it comes to studying. This sparked the thought that knowing your learning style is crucial to success in school. Knowing how you learn will give you a foundation for studying and practicing concepts. If you do not know the best way to learn, you can’t put it into practice and will be stuck rehearsing habits that don’t benefit you.

There are four distinct styles of retaining information: visual learners, auditory learners, kinesthetic learners and reading/writing learners. Firstly, visual learners learn best when using visual aids such as charts, graphs and diagrams when trying to learn. If you find yourself needing to see information and struggle with picking up information just by hearing it, you may just be a visual learner! Visual learners are super common, making up about 65 percent of the population. The next most common type of learners are auditory learners, who are approximately 30 percent of the population. This means they prefer to hear or speak information. Having someone explain concepts out loud to you, or explaining things back to them can help comprehension if you learn auditorily. Kinesthetic learners are more uncommon, with only five percent of the population identifying with this style. If you often need to use real-life examples or to put things into practice to fully grasp an idea, you may be a kinesthetic learner. Wanting to feel or move during the learning process is another kinesthetic trait. Finally, some people just prefer to read or write to learn information. Written notes are super important to this type of learner because you write when taking notes, and later read them to study. Knowing your learning type or what combination of types you have can make studying more interesting and enjoyable.

Study hacks for visual learners include drawing diagrams or putting information into a chart or graph. For auditory learners, watching a video to hear the information or repeating important key points from notes should help. Repeating information out loud is actually a great memorization technique and can be beneficial to all learners. Kinesthetic learners will thrive with practice problems and using movements and gestures to remember content. Reading/writing learners can stick with tried and true note-taking.

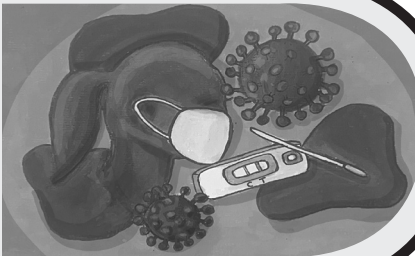
Personally, I feel like I would be an auditory learner because I often find myself trying to recall quotes from a teacher when taking tests and needing to repeat something out loud to remember it. If you are still unsure about the best way for you to learn you should try some of the hacks I shared and see which you resonate with most. Who knows, you may discover that parts of each learning style apply to you, making you a little bit of everything.

YEAR IN NEWS 2024

JANUARY 12

BUSD updates COVID-19 policies

Back in January, the Berkeley Unified School District sent out a newsletter updating the community on new policies regarding COVID-19. In the article, Violet Miller-Brady explains the changes in policy, what led the district to make these changes, and how the community reacted to them. The changes included the district no longer sending out exposure notifications, and allowing non-symptomatic students to continue attending school after testing positive as long as they continue to wear a mask.

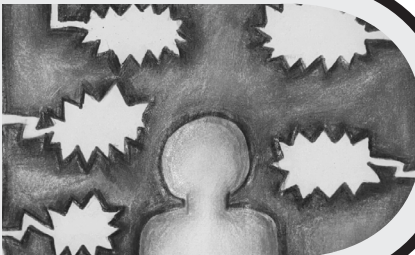


ANISHA PINTO

FEBRUARY 28

ADL files complaint against BUSD

In late February, Sydney Lehrer covered the Brandeis Center for Human Rights Under Law and the Anti-Defamation League filing a federal complaint against the Berkeley Unified School District, alleging “severe and persistent” anti-Semitism on BUSD campuses. The controversial complaint was met with pushback, with the BUSD Jewish Parents for Collective Liberation calling the complaint “ ... another harassment tactic intended to censor teaching our children about Palestine.”



ALESSIO GILABERT-PAPAGNI

MAY 3

Walk out over racial discrimination

In May, approximately 150 Berkeley High School students gathered upon the senior steps to protest the mistreatment of Black students and teachers at BHS. At the protest, beginning around 9:40 a.m., a student sang the Black National Anthem, and others shared stories about discrimination in the classroom and highlighted a lack of Black teachers within the school district. Written by Josephine Morasky, the article described a desire among protesters for tangible action and systemic change throughout BUSD.



QUINCY MORRIS-FRY

JUNE 14

Dry rot requires Longfellow closure

Over the summer, Longfellow Middle School Principal Salita Mitchell announced in an email that the campus had to temporarily close after dry rot was discovered in the campus’ main building. Maia Astera wrote about the discovery and how the entire student body then had to relocate to the Berkeley Adult School. While the transition had its challenges, “It’s going to be the same teachers and the same kids, and that’s what makes Longfellow beautiful. It’s the people,” said teacher Mary Patterson.



ZOE KOHLMAYER

AUGUST 6

Seniors reflect on Harris-Walz ticket

After a whirlwind of political developments, including an assassination attempt and a disastrous debate performance, the Democratic Party replaced President Joe Biden with Vice President Kamala Harris as the nominee for the 2024 presidential election. On Tuesday Aug. 6, 2024, Harris announced her running mate, Governor of Minnesota Tim Walz. In the article, Aaron Stevens interviewed several voting-age BHS seniors for their thoughts on the fresh Harris-Walz presidential ticket.



IRIS LE LIBOUX

OCTOBER 8

Students stage walk out for Palestine

Covered by Aubrey Casper, Berkeley High School students and staff, as well as Berkeley community members, staged a walk out at the Civic Center park in protest of the ongoing war in Gaza and the United States’ involvement. Protesters urged the Berkeley City Council to pass a ceasefire resolution, and were met by a small group of pro-Israel counter protesters. The pro-Palestine protesters then walked over to Shattuck Avenue and Allston Way, blocking traffic on the street and holding signs.



MAREN MATHEWS

NOVEMBER 5

BHS students react to Trump’s win

Writer Natalie Gross interviewed several Berkeley High School students after Donald Trump won the 2024 presidential election, defeating Vice President Kamala Harris. Students expressed concerns over the threat of mass deportation and the removal of abortion and LGBTQIA+ rights. The following Friday, Nov. 8, 2024, BHS’s Sunrise Club organized a walk out in protest of the election results. At the walkout, students painted a mural, put up signs, and shared speeches.



ALISA KARIN KOLPAKOVA

BERKELEY HIGH JACKET

OPINION

OPINION EDITORS: ADITYA SRIDHARAN & OHAD AVIRAN-FINKELSTEIN

ADITYASRIDHARAN@STUDENTS.BERKELEY.NET

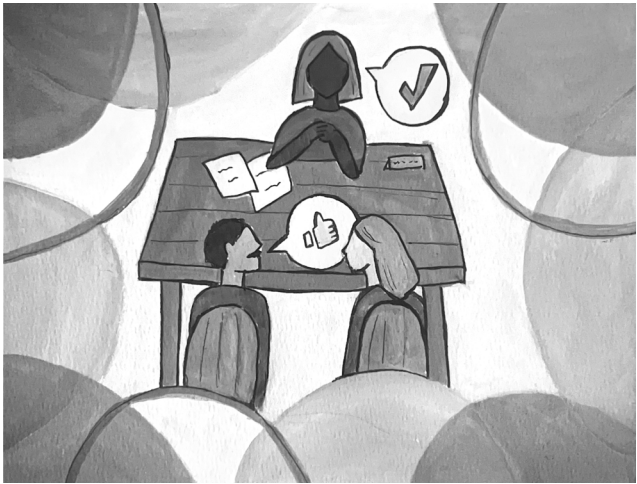
Parent-teacher bonds fuel student success

BY CEDAR GILMOUR
staff writer

From parent-teacher conferences to career days and field trips, parents and teachers often have a collaborative relationship in elementary and middle schools. Yet, as students from Berkeley Unified School District's three middle schools converge into Berkeley High School, the relationship between teachers and parents often becomes minimal to non-existent. Combating this phenomenon by having teachers and parents build stronger relationships is vital because it plays an important role in helping students succeed academically.

Apart from the annual Stronger parent-teacher

back-to-school night and the occasional field trip, parents and teachers at BHS have little to no interaction, making it hard to build a relationship. However, according to the New York Times, the most effective relationships between families and educators are built on regular communication, not just occasional interactions. Taking this into account, it is crucial to increase the opportunities for parent-teacher interactions. More field trips and parent volunteer opportunities would facilitate this. A lack of a parent-teacher relationship can be harmful to students, especially when navigating a large high school environment like that of BHS.



ANISHA PINTO

er relationships support educators and parents in addition to the students themselves. According to the Pepperdine School of Education and Psychology, teachers who have an understanding of a student's home life, strengths, weaknesses, and behavioral or academic challenges can better prepare lesson plans and empathize with students. For parents, more communication with their child's teachers helps them stay informed about their child's academic performance, which can allow them to offer at-home guidance. This joint effort creates a stronger student support system both at school and at home.

While some may argue that high school is a time for students to take responsibility for their own education and develop independence, it is important to recognize that this is not possible without mentorship from teachers and family. Research has shown that a student's self-sufficiency is highly dependent on outside support and help with goal setting, independent learning, and feedback.

While parent-teacher communication is crucial to addressing students' individual academic needs, at

a large public high school like BHS, it can be challenging. Most BHS teachers teach about five periods a day, managing large classes with diverse needs, making it easy for individual struggles to go unnoticed. The large number of students each teacher is responsible for makes personalized attention and one-on-one conversations with parents more challenging. However, while personal and one-on-one time between parents and teachers may be unrealistic, it is still possible to foster community. Teachers can ask for parental help with projects and materials, and parents can offer their time on field trips and take an interest in their children's school life. In doing so, parents and teachers can help one another with their ultimate goal: their students' success.

Altogether, strengthening the relationship between teachers and parents is key in a public school environment. Hosting more in-school opportunities for teachers and parents to interact is the most practical way to strengthen these relationships. In the long run, such efforts will have a positive impact on students' academic performance and emotional wellbeing.

Cigarettes' allure rises, harming youth

BY ZOE WHITMAN
staff writer

The attraction of smoking has yet to be crushed. Despite smoking being at an 80-year-low and prominent anti-smoking campaigns, smoking has regrettably become "cool" again. At New York Fashion Week in February, models strutted down the runway with lit cigarettes in hand. In her "Aquamarine" music video — which has been viewed over four million times — Addison Rae smokes two cigarettes at once. Pop star Charli XCX and her Brat Summer depicted cigarettes as a cool addition to one's outfit and aesthetic. This is alarming considering that cigarettes are known to be harmful for both those smoking and those around them via second-hand smoke. In the face of this resurgence, the romanticization of cigarettes must be mitigated for the sake of young people's health.

Smoking started its fall from glory in 1964 when

the U.S. Surgeon General declared it caused lung cancer. This happened during the generations of many high schoolers' parents. As a result, Gen Z and Gen Alpha are some of the most educated on smoking's ill effects. Hence, one would think it would be hard for smoking to regain a foothold. However, many youth don't want to be like their parents — they want a little rebellion. In fact, some research studies have found that the graphic "preventative" warning labels on cigarettes might encourage youth to smoke in defiance of authority. And while anti-smoking ads have helped tremendously, 2.25 million middle and high schoolers still use tobacco products regularly.

In addition, many kids today know people who smoke. In fact, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, one in four high schoolers have reported smoking in the last 30 days. This means that kids are not only being desensitized to smoking,

but they also now see people who smoke and, potentially, appear to be healthy. While smoking can stain teeth and make one cough, it may take years for someone to be diagnosed with a lung disease. It's not until later that the detrimental impacts are taken into account: obstructive pulmonary disease, bronchitis, emphysema, and an increase in pneumonia and tuberculosis.

Watching celebrities embrace smoking has opened a new chapter in the fight against tobacco. If someone you look up to does something, most people will want to follow suit. When teenagers see Charli XCX get gifted

a bouquet of cigarettes and light up at her concerts, they are then motivated to pick up their own Bic lighter and pack of cancer sticks.

Teenagers pray to be cool, following the trend cycle while trying to stay unique. Now that many are embracing cigarettes, they want to participate. Smoking will forever be one of the worst choices, promoting cancer and polluting the earth. To eliminate smoking, cigarettes have to lose their coolness and be seen as what they are: a disaster. Nevertheless, combating centuries of cultural practice, no matter how harmful, will be a difficult fight.



IRIS LE LIBOUX

THE SELF-CARE CHRONICLES

HANNAH SUMNER



High school can be overwhelming. From managing assignments, to late-night cramming, friends, and sports, the list goes on. It can feel like there is so much pressure from teachers, parents, peers, and even ourselves. Said pressure can lead to burnout, lethargy, and in some cases, even depression.

This is where self care comes in. Self care, according to the Oxford dictionary, is "the practice of taking action to preserve or improve one's own health." When some people think of self care, they think of it being selfish, expensive, and time consuming, but I am here to tell you that self care is vital to the survival of high school.

The first form of self care that I would like to introduce to you is physical self care.

One part of physical self care is being active. Whether that means playing a club or school sport, going for a run, doing yoga, or just walking around, it's important to move your body daily. Being active, on top of reducing your risk of health problems, helps you to release endorphins. Endorphins are hormones that your brain releases in order to relieve pain, reduce stress, and improve your mood. Yup! Working out helps you to recover faster physically and mentally. Softball is my sport of choice, I have been playing it for eight years and it has helped improve my physical and mental health, which by definition is self care.

Nutrition is another important factor in physical self care. While I love eating ice cream and drinking boba, I also recognize that it is important to eat healthy food and drink lots of water. It's beneficial to start your day with a nutritious breakfast with protein, like eggs, yogurt, or a breakfast burrito. For lunch, it's key to have lean proteins and complex carbohydrates, including (but not limited to) chicken and rice, burrito bowls, as well as sushi. As for dinner, it's recommended to have meals with fiber and low saturated fat, such as chickpea curry, chili, and tofu-vegetable stir fry. For adolescents, it's recommended to drink eight cups of water a day, so make sure to fill up your Owalas, Hydroflasks, and/or Stanleys. But don't forget that having the occasional boba and ice cream are okay too, because eating and drinking are not only for nourishing your body, but also for nourishing your soul — an essential part of self care.

The last example of physical self care for today is sleep. I know the feeling of cramming for tests and spending countless hours mindlessly scrolling through social media late at night, but did you know that it's scientifically proven that getting enough sleep is more beneficial for tests than cramming all night? Try aiming for eight hours of sleep a night, but if that feels like too much, go to sleep thirty minutes before you normally do. With that, Jackets, remember to be active, nourish yourself, and get your Zs in order to keep you on your self care journey.

Healthy produce is crucial to health and must be accessible to all

BY KAITLYN FISCHL
staff writer

Having access to healthy and nutritious food is essential for maintaining good health. However, in 2023 a study found that over 42 percent of the world’s population could not afford a healthy diet. A recent study by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency also found that people in wealthier areas had access to over three times as many supermarkets as those in poorer neighborhoods. With this in mind, healthy foods must become more accessible and affordable to the wider community.

Healthy food is an important part of our diets and helps our bodies function the way they need to. A study published by the Journal of the American College of Cardiology found that diets rich in fruits and vegetables can lower systolic blood pressure by an average of eight to 14 mm Hg in people who are dealing with high blood pressure. Healthy produce has numerous positive benefits for our body and allows us to stay energized throughout

the day.

Over 23 million Americans live in low-income households and neighborhoods over a mile from the closest grocery store. As the food industry and companies grow, fewer farmers’ markets or small businesses can open, leaving grocery stores scarce or far and few between in lower-income areas. If people lived closer and had more access to grocery stores, they would be exposed to more nutritious foods, leading to healthier eating habits.

Unfortunately, as produce prices rise, fewer people are able to purchase healthy foods. Compared to the extremely cheap prices of ultra-processed foods, it is hard to see produce as the right eating choice in the eyes of the consumer. Eating a healthy, produce-rich diet costs around \$1.50 more per day, per person, than having an unhealthy diet. Households with the lowest incomes, spending approximately \$14.46 per day on food, have greater difficulty maximizing their budget when purchasing healthy foods.

Produce and healthy food prices need to be made

more affordable and accessible to everyone regardless of race, gender, ethnicity, and social class. According to the American Heart Association’s Epidemiology, lowering the prices of healthy foods by 30 percent would save almost 200,000 lives over 15 years. However, the reason organic and healthy foods cost so much money is due to supply and demand, labor shortages, and unpredictable weather conditions. Considering this, it is unlikely that the prices of produce will go down by a significant amount.

Nevertheless, there are still ways we can promote change within our communities. Food drives are a great way to help people get nutrients and healthy food. More food drives should be established around areas with lower income rates. Even small actions like volunteering at a food drive or just donating extra food and canned goods can make a meaningful difference.

Mitigating food waste is another strategy. Americans waste almost 60 million tons of food each year. That is nearly 40 percent of the entire U.S. food supply. This wasted food con-



A customer selects an organic apple at Safeway.

SUNNY BEVIS-LIPTON

tributes to a loss of money, land, and natural resources. Saving healthy foods that would otherwise go to waste and donating them is crucial. Moreover, if buyers do not over-purchase foods, the supply available would increase, resulting in a potential decrease in the price of healthy foods. Planning out your meals before shopping and freezing food you won’t be able to eat within a few days of being purchased

are just a few ways you can limit the amount of waste you contribute.

Growing your own food and community gardens are another way to bring healthy fresh produce to communities with less access to supermarkets. Community gardens promote sustainable agriculture and provide healthy and nutritious food. Vegetables and fruits grown in your own home gardens also will have

more nutrients than those bought in stores.

Healthy food must become accessible to all. From helping stop hunger, to decreasing obesity, everyone in Berkeley would benefit from these efforts. While unfair pricing and accessibility are rooted systemically, there are plenty of small changes we can make to help move the needle, and together, we can make healthy produce available to everyone.

If implemented thoughtfully, retakes fuel students’ academic success

BY REECE FONG
staff writer

Should students be given a second chance to prove their understanding, or should a single test define their grasp of the material? In a national survey conducted online by Edutopia, around 78 percent of U.S. high school teachers offer retakes. Retakes are an excellent opportunity to improve students’ grades and help them master material, as well as spark a newfound interest in the concepts. At the same time, many higher-level high school courses

do not have time to review every unit and offer retakes. While retakes can be a powerful tool to reinforce learning and help students master material at their own pace, they should be offered thoughtfully, balancing growth and learning with preparing students for the real world.

A benefit of retakes is that they allow students to relearn material and ingrain concepts into their long-term memory. Because school is about learning, and all students learn at their own pace, retakes are a logical option to allow different students to dem-

onstrate their mastery of the subject, in a more flexible time frame. “Retakes help all students, even those who don’t need to retake because we do retake review, and what we call space retrieval practice is good for driving long-term memory formation, according to some of the more recent cognitive science research,” said Aaron Glimme, an AP Chemistry teacher at Berkeley High School. In other words, retakes aren’t just a second chance; they’re a smarter way to learn. “Retakes fit naturally by driving that (learning) the stuff, (putting) it away for a while,

(coming) back to it, and (relearning) it again. That repeated retrieval practice has been shown scientifically to drive longer-term memories,” Glimme said. Such scientific research that demonstrates the benefits of retakes should not be ignored.

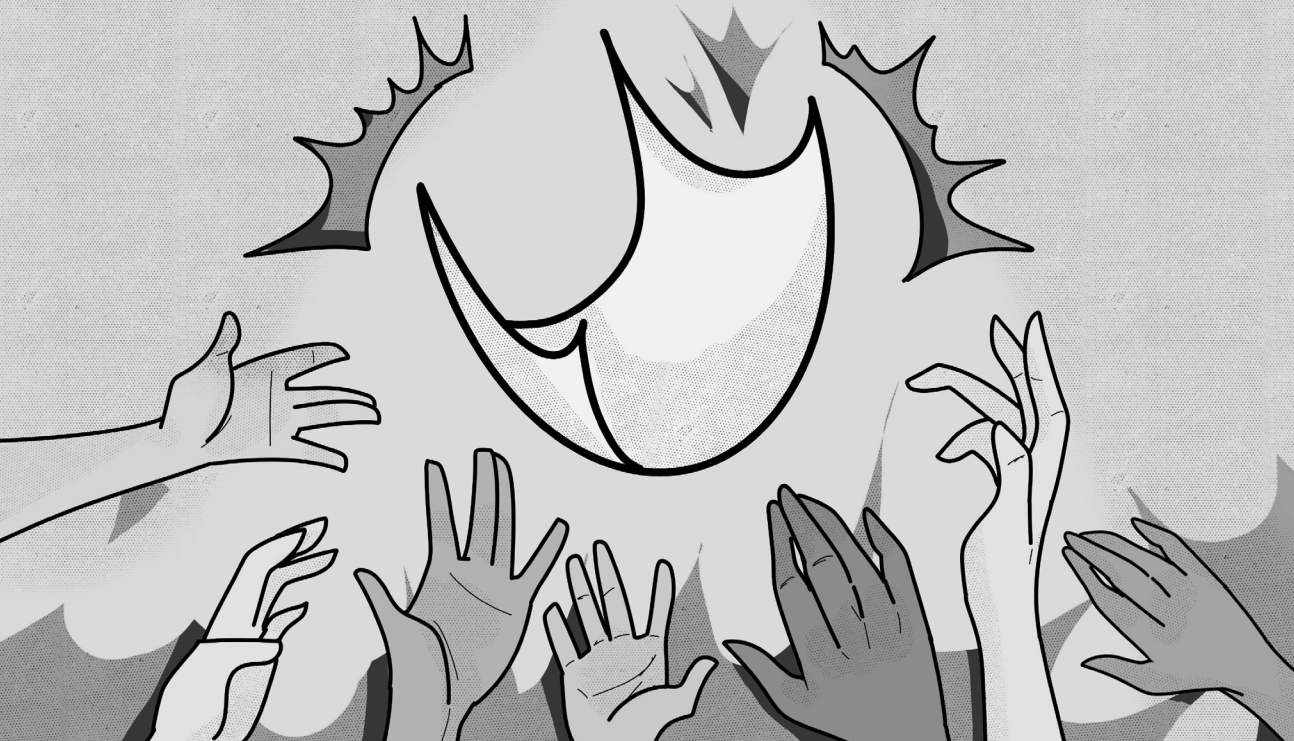
Furthermore, for students who learn at a slower pace, receiving low scores on tests can be very daunting. Without a retake, students are more prone to just giving up when they can’t learn the material quickly enough. “If you don’t have a retake, students who don’t learn the material at the pace

that the class is moving have very little incentive to learn the material. And this way, at least there is a continual incentive to master material that you haven’t learned or ensure you have understood the content eventually,” Glimme said. Retakes provide a way for all students to master material and receive a good grade, at their own speed. In this way, retakes make students excited about a new opportunity, rather than upset over previous assignments, mitigating disengagement in classes.

Nevertheless, retakes can be an unrealistic safeguard against failure, as retakes are not offered in college and beyond. Additionally, some higher-level courses do not have the time to allow for retakes. Jesse Pabico, the AP Physics C teacher at BHS, said, “In college, you are expected to remember a lot of information for the current class that you’re taking. And if you forget something, it’s not the responsibility of the professor to review, because they have to cover more advanced material in a limited time frame.” College professors don’t have the time to go back and review material for students who fall behind, making retakes a very large burden for them. Without the option of retakes, students in higher-level courses are forced to learn how to take responsibility for their

own learning by studying extra hard for their exams. “I find that even without giving retakes, students are willing to improve themselves and they take it upon themselves to improve their skills and be better prepared for the next exam,” Pabico stated, emphasizing the benefit of not allowing retakes. Although retakes may soften the blow of mistakes, they don’t prepare students for the reality that failure is a part of everyday life.

All in all, retakes might not work in every advanced class, but for many students, they are a strategic way to learn and understand class material. Improvement and growth should be encouraged over perfection and punishing mistakes. While some more rigorous courses may not have time for retakes, the majority of high school classes should offer them to give every student a fair shot at success. However, when used blindly and without caution, retakes can hinder students’ abilities to accept and move on from failure — a key skill in life beyond high school. Ultimately, when implemented thoughtfully and regulated well, retakes prove to be a vital opportunity for students to improve themselves, deepen their learning of the material, and prepare themselves for future success.



JAY TRAUNER

EDITORIAL

Youth climate action becomes more important than ever before

President-elect Donald Trump has made many of his climate and environmental policy intentions clear. From the repeal of the Inflation Reduction Act — which was planned to invest hundreds of billions of dollars promoting clean energy and tax credits — to the shrinking of the Environmental Protection Agency and a U.S. withdrawal from the Paris Climate Accord, Trump will undo many of the Biden administration's policies all while exacerbating the impacts of climate change. In light of these detrimental changes, it is more important than ever that youth be involved in climate action.

As 21.7 percent of the United States' population, it's crystal clear that individuals under 18 can have a huge impact on the climate crisis. Although youth don't have the constitutional

right to vote, they can still be active in their communities and fight against Trump's policies. "I think it's very discouraging, obviously, to have a president who doesn't care about climate legislation, but the truth is there's a lot of politicians that represent you, and the state level in California is really good at pushing climate legislation, so by calling representatives and getting involved in local politics, students can fight for climate legislation," explained Ilana Nickolaus, the president of the Berkeley High School Green Team. As a democratic stronghold and leader in climate action, California will still be able to pass legislation under the Trump presidency to decrease its carbon footprint.

Students can also join non school-affiliated organizations such as the Bay Area Youth Climate Summit, which organizes in-depth and interdisciplinary workshops on climate action or participate in climate change related events such as San Francisco's Climate Week which is coming up in a few months from April 19 to 27. With the state having a history of activism and so many opportunities to get involved, it is up to California's youth to push for changes in order to prevent the climate crisis.

Although it might seem like fighting against climate change can be very time consuming, there are many indirect ways students can help save the planet. If students do not want to take the political route, they can focus on saving electricity and water at home and at school as well as calculating their own carbon footprint online. Students can also pay more attention to the food they eat and travel. For every 100 grams of beef, a red meat, produced, about 50 kilograms of carbon dioxide is

emitted into the atmosphere. By cutting out red meats, students can drastically reduce their carbon footprint and decrease the amount of carbon released. To go even further, students could consider becoming vegan, which a study from Oxford University found was the single most impactful way an individual could help the environment.

Changes in youth transportation habits would also be significantly impactful. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, transportation accounts for 28 percent of total carbon emissions. While driving may shorten travel times, it has a terribly negative impact on the global climate. Instead of driving, students should try to walk, bike, carpool, and ride buses more. For shorter distances, walking and biking provide an emission-free and healthy alternative. For longer trips, public transport is often cheaper and certainly less environmentally-harmful than a car trip. By thinking more purposefully about transportation, students can begin getting from point A to B while mitigating their impact on the environment.

In the face of environmental setbacks and a new presidency, it can be easy to give up on any sort of climate initiative. While this feeling is understandable, it is exactly the opposite of what youth should be doing. Now, more than ever, it is vital for youth to partake in small yet meaningful climate actions. Whether taking the political route or making changes to one's daily habits, the most important thing is to take a stand and get involved. This is the most meaningful way to oppose the catastrophic Trump administration's plans.

BERKELEY HIGH JACKET

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Not all submissions will be printed and may be edited to conform to *Jacket* policy or to meet space restrictions.

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Looming Trump presidency renders sanctuary cities vital

BY HAILEY OSTRER
staff writer

As of 2018, Berkeley has been considered the most progressive major town in California, with over 70 percent of voters registered to the Democratic party. In 1971, Berkeley became the first "sanctuary city" in the country. Sanctuary city is a non-legal term used for regions that discourage local law enforcement from reporting the immigration status of a person unless they committed a serious crime. As a sanctuary city, Berkeley protects undocumented residents against the U.S.' Immigration and Customs Enforcement, furthering its reputation as a safe haven. However, the president-elect, Donald Trump, has called upon Congress to ban the ability for regions to gain sanctuary status. This strengthens the need for more cities, counties, and states to become sanctuaries before it becomes no longer possible. By doing this, the lives of the nearly eight million immigrants who call these sanctuary cities home will not be uprooted, and the economy they support will remain stable.

In 1971, the U.S.S. Coral

Sea sat in the San Francisco Bay, waiting to depart to deliver soldiers to Vietnam in five days. A thousand of the soldiers on board started an anti-war petition called Stop Our Ship. This sparked a meeting in Berkeley, where an agreement was made to extend sanctuary to soldiers who disagreed with the war. Although only 35 of the 4,500 men on board chose not to make the journey, Stop Our Ship sparked a nationwide shift, inspiring governments to resist immigration laws at a local level.

The sanctuary movement has spread since Berkeley took the first step. 13 states have become sanctuary states, like California, North Dakota, and Illinois. However, some of these states, like North Dakota did not vote Democratic in the last election. This means that sanctuary status has become more about the importance of supporting immigrants, rather than taking a political stand. This is encouraging as states and counties, regardless of their political ideals, should consider welcoming community members without citizenship or documents.

To encourage change and persuade cities to become sanctuaries, it's important

to know the human side of the term "undocumented immigrants." It's a designation that describes people who are residents of the U.S. and don't have documentation such as a green card or a valid Visa. What this term doesn't include is the contributions these residents have made to the American economy. It's a myth that they do not pay taxes and are residents who unfairly benefit from the taxes of citizens. Contrary to popular belief, undocumented immigrants do pay taxes. In 2022, U.S. residents without status paid \$75.6 billion in taxes that went toward development and funding for publicly owned resources, such as schools.

Despite their contributions, the president-elect Donald Trump says the first thing he will do in office is begin a mass deportation of immigrants. This includes stripping federal resources to cities, like sanctuary cities, that refuse to take part in these mass deportations.

Right now we should be pushing to create as many sanctuary cities and states as possible so that we can ensure undocumented immigrants are safe in this country even under Trump's presidency.



IRIS LE LIBOUX

INVESTIGATIVE

INVESTIGATIVE EDITORS: PENELOPE PURCHASE & SYDNEY LEHRER

PENELOPEPURCHASE@STUDENTS.BERKELEY.NET

The teacher turnover crisis: Why 44% quit within five years

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

generally for teachers are low,” Pratt said. According to Samantha Borg, who’s been teaching for 25 years, 19 years of which were at BHS, the drastic contrast between teacher pay in other countries and the United States also plays a role in the stark teacher retention rate here. “A lot of people are fleeing the profession, because there’s just so much output and then you give so much of yourself, of your time, of just everything, and then ... to not be compensated financially in a way that, in any other profession, it would be market rate. In other countries, teachers are some of the top paid professions, but again, here in the United States, it’s not that way,” Borg said.

Salaries shared with The Jacket by the BUSD administration reflected financial compensation below the state average. According to the data, a mid-range teacher salary in BUSD is \$86,582 for teachers with a master’s and a bachelor’s degree, though the highest teacher pay is \$119,053. The California state average, however, is \$95,160 – the best in the nation, according to the National Education Association. A beginning teacher salary for those with preliminary or clear credentials is \$68,881 at BUSD. According to Zillow, the median monthly cost of rent for all property types in Berkeley is \$2,699, in comparison to the national median of \$2,000. For new teachers, an already difficult to navigate BUSD only becomes more difficult when the financial burden of housing and basic amenities becomes unmanageable.

During a BUSD school board meeting on Monday, Oct. 7th, educators spoke up to advocate for higher pay. Azhia Long, a third grade teacher at Rosa Parks Elementary School explained that she wishes to continue working in the district, but may not be able to if salaries are not

raised. “Half of my monthly salary is allocated to rent ... The time is now, treat us with dignity and offer compensation that is sustainable to my colleagues and me. I want to stay in this district but I’m not sure if I’ll be able to do so,” Long said at the meeting. Viridiana Castro Silva, a fellow teacher of Long’s at Rosa Parks Elementary School, agreed. Castro Silva explained during the meeting that she is unable to live within the district she serves due to low pay, which she finds to be unacceptable. She resonated with Long’s perspective, advocating for an increased compensation offer for teachers.

Borg believes the reason teachers may leave the occupation within five years of beginning their careers at BHS has to do with the period of life the person is in. She explained that starting out is particularly difficult, especially at BHS due to the sheer size of the school and thus the difficulties of navigating all aspects of the profession.

“It’s not the easiest school to start your career in because there’s so much going on and so many different aspects of the job to

learn. It’s a school with a lot of resources but you kind of have to learn how to access those resources, and that takes time,” Borg said.

Joseph Marchant, an English teacher at BHS, has endured similar difficulties in the two years he’s been a teacher. He feels that understanding the big picture is crucial, but difficult in frustrating moments. “I think that it is a challenge working with young people, and there are times in the classroom where you feel overwhelmed and outnumbered and exhausted, and it’s really tough to see the positive side of the work that you’re doing in (that) moment,” Marchant said.

Borg and Pratt also believe that there are many societal factors that contribute to a turnover disparity between teaching and other careers. For example, Pratt made a comparison between teaching and the medical field; how the two require a similar level of commitment and work but teaching pays far less and does not have the same level of prestige in society.

“A young doctor ... they’re miserable, but they know that the

long term trajectory of their career is one that is going to involve solid and potentially excellent financial compensation ... and that’s just not true in the same way for teachers,” Pratt said.

In addition to the occupation requiring many of the same prerequisites and pedigrees that other much higher paying jobs have, according to Pratt, being a teacher is very mentally taxing. “Teaching is a really challenging job that takes a long time to learn how to do well,” Pratt said.

Pratt explained that there are also many problems deeply ingrained in society regarding how teachers are treated and viewed by the public, such as lack of recognition and social respectability. “Fundamentally, there’s not enough recognition of just how complex and challenging the job of being an effective teacher is,” Pratt said.

Pratt added that the lack of external validation teachers receive — despite the immense effort and talent teaching requires — deters new educators from pursuing their careers in education.

Additionally, according to Borg, although there are many factors involved, she believes the amount of work required to be a successful teacher is the largest contributor to the astoundingly high numbers of teachers leaving the profession. “Teaching is ... very demanding, particularly of one’s energy, both physically and emotionally. So I think burnout is probably the number one reason why people decide to stop teaching, along with the pay,” Borg said.

Based on the information gathered from Pratt and Borg, disregarding any issues involved in teaching itself, the most challenging aspect is getting past the first few years of teaching. “It’s deeply rewarding work, it’s fun, and that’s part of what’s kept me in it for as long ... (but) for teachers in their first couple of years, the burdens and the challenges kind of outweigh those rewards,” Pratt said.

According to Borg, the future does not have a negative trajectory, but in order to solve the issue of high rates of teacher turnovers, much change needs to occur in the education system. “I am hopeful that it can improve, but I think in order for it to improve, there’s going to have to be a massive nationwide campaign to change how education is done in this country, but also how it is

delivered,” Borg said.

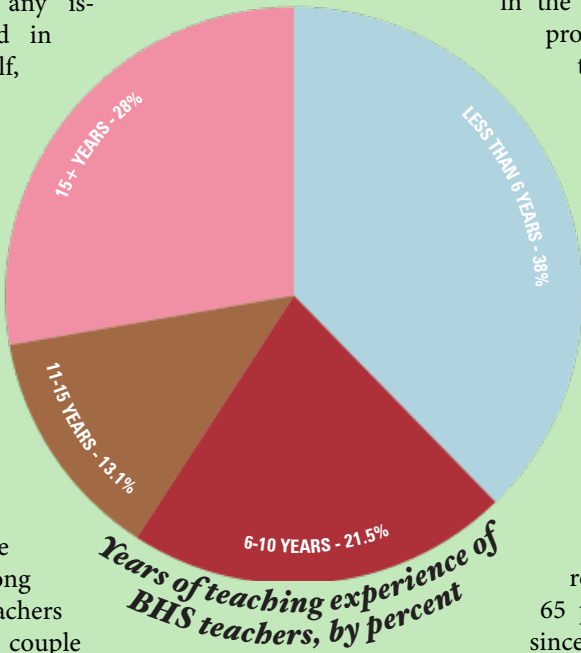
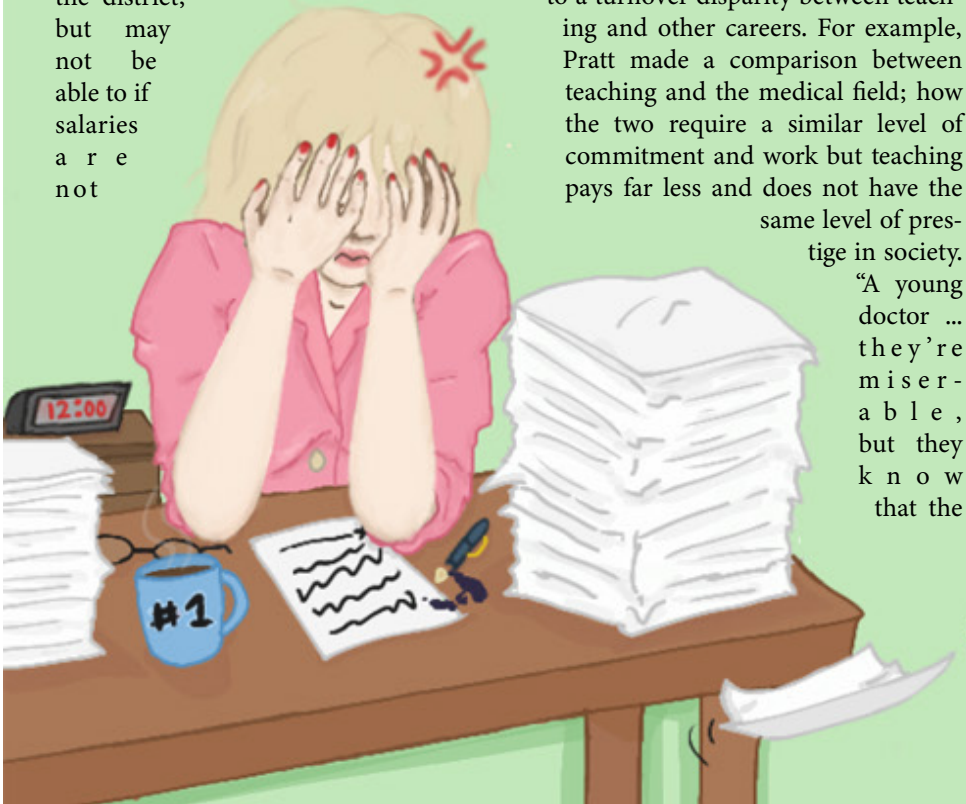
Marchant believes that to address this issue teachers simply must receive more help and support during the beginning of their careers — as well as in general — and must be paid more. “I think there’s a lot of things that schools can do to make

their teachers feel more supported and more seen, in addition to, well, just paying them more, to be honest,” Marchant said.

Currently, BUSD is addressing issues with teacher retention and recruitment with a local parcel tax measure called the Berkeley Schools Excellence Program (BSEP). According to the website, one focus of BSEP is to recruit qualified teachers and keep them in the profession. The program intends to do this by constructing more viable pathways for all staff involved in education. According to the BSEP website, the fund has made a significant impact on new teacher enrollment, with a 65 percent increase since 2019.

According to Pratt, the future is not yet determined; it is highly contingent upon the way we address the issue.

“I’m not holding out for dramatic change ... But I’m not pessimistic ... I think part of it going forward is also that we’re in the middle of these really fundamental shifts in our economy and in the world that high school graduates are going out into, and that also requires some rethinking of how we recruit teachers to do that work,” Pratt said.



Source: Betty Dwivedi, BUSD Human Resources

BHS support systems combat causes of loneliness in teens

BY MAIA ASTERA
staff writer

IMPORTANCE

According to the United States Surgeon General, Vice Admiral Vivek H. Murthy, the U.S. is facing a loneliness epidemic. In 2023, Murthy raised concerns about loneliness in the U.S. through a Surgeon General Advisory. He referred to loneliness as a “public health crisis,” more widespread than smoking, diabetes, and anxiety, and needing to be treated with urgency.

A study done by the Cigna Corporation, a healthcare insurance company, estimates that loneliness affects one in two adults. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 42 percent of teenagers experience persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness.

Berkeley High School has many mental health resources in place for students who might be struggling with loneliness or other mental health issues, such as the Wellness Center, the Health Center, and mental health counselors.

In December of 2023, BHS officially opened the Wellness Center, made in partnership between the City of Berkeley and Berkeley Unified School District. This 2024-25 school year will be its first full year of operation. The Wellness Center provides a space for students to go when feeling overwhelmed, lonely, lost, or just wanting a break.

Loriann Casillas, the Mental Health and Wellbeing Coordinator for BUSD, explained the Wellness Center's emphasis on helping students form connections. “A student should have on campus 10 to 15 trusted adults and a group of friends that they can go to. And if they don't have that, then I'm wondering why, and what's preventing that, and then how can we support creating those connections,” Casillas said.

ACADEMIC PRESSURE

There are many things that can contribute to feeling detached from your community. Casillas cited grades, social media, and the school's lunch culture all as possible contributors to feelings of loneliness at BHS.

“I've noticed when grades are posted, for instance marking period grades, there seems to be an influx of students who want to check in (to the Wellness Center),” Casillas said.

Fatemeh Mizbani is an AP Chemistry teacher at BHS. She explained that she recognizes the role that academic pressure plays in loneliness for some students. Mizbani explained that she's noticed that many students who are struggling academically begin isolating themselves, which she said can lead to falling even further behind in class.

Her advice for students struggling with grades affecting their mental health is to come to her lunch tutorials, and “try to make friends with people who are struggling.” She stressed the importance of finding common ground with other students.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Aside from grades, social media can also play a role

in student isolation, Rosie Silverberg, a sophomore at BHS, explained, “Social media definitely affects loneliness, because when you're on social media you can see what all your peers are doing, see what your friends are doing, and that can definitely make you feel lonely, especially if you weren't maybe invited to those things.”

This is supported by studies such as one performed by Brian A. Primack of Pittsburgh School of Medicine, which found that young adults in the U.S. with high social media usage seem to feel more socially isolated than their counterparts with lower social media usage.

LUNCH CULTURE

Every day, Mizbani and many other teachers offer their classrooms to students needing extra help or study time. The Wellness Center does the same, allowing students a space to eat, away from the usual busy lunch atmosphere of BHS' off-campus eating arrangements.

BHS's lunch structure can be stressful for some students. One student, who chose to stay anonymous for privacy reasons, stated how freshman year lunch was difficult for them, and overwhelming at times. As someone who came from a private school, they found it hard to schedule lunch plans for every day of the week but didn't want to be seen eating lunch alone.

“The school is so big, you're always going to see people,” the student said. “You don't want to be walking around alone ... that can be scary for some people.”

“It's kind of looked down upon to eat lunch alone. But it really shouldn't be,” Benjamin Vu, a BHS sophomore, said.

Silverberg said how many students, including herself, would “be fine eating alone and just listening to music and just having a rest hour, but they wouldn't want other kids and their peers to see them eating lunch alone.”

Both Silverberg and Vu expressed that they don't think eating lunch alone would make them feel lonely, but they wouldn't want anyone to perceive them as people who are. At a school like BHS, which serves an approximated 3,200 students as stated by BUSD's website, different students will have varying experiences. Some might find it easy to fly under the radar, and others believe it hard to ever get a moment to themselves.

ISOLATION IN A LARGE SCHOOL

Kitzya Aguilar, a counselor at BHS, has heard many similar sentiments from students. She explained that part of the wellness center's goal is to “provide a space for people ... so they don't feel like eyes are on them when they're alone.”

While there's no shortage of students at BHS, many still experience feelings of loneliness. “The thing about BHS and making friends is, in order to do that, you have to really put yourself out there, and it's hard for a lot of students to do that,” Silverberg said.

Students and staff recommended joining clubs or a team as a way to build connections.

“Meeting people through sports and clubs is definite-

ly very different than your friends in your classes. You just spend a lot more time with them, and you're able to develop a stronger bond,” Silverberg said.

Even while at a big school like BHS, which has many resources available to students, it can still be hard to reach out. This is one of the reasons Murthy released the Surgeon General's Advisory on the Healing Effects of Social Connection and Community.

“We are called to build a movement to mend the social fabric of our nation. It will take all of us,” Murthy wrote in a letter at the preface of the advisory, listing schools, among other groups, as needing to be a part of the movement to change. Murthy urged everyone to continue taking steps towards strengthening connections and relationships.

“There is a stigma around mental health, and we're trying to destigmatize that,” Casillas said. Referring to the recent opening of the Wellness Center, she added, “the strides BHS has made are impressive, and a model too, not only to the county, but also the state.”



Help Is Available:

The Health Center:
(510)644-6965
Room H-105
Open during school hours, Mon-Fri, with the exception of 12:30-1:15 p.m. each day.

The Wellness Center:
Room H-104
Open Mondays from 10:10-3:23 and Tue-Fri from 8:40-3:23

Counseling:
Reach out to your counselor through their email:
firstnamelastname@berkeley.net

Crisis Text Line:
Text HOME to 741741 for free, confidential, 24/7 support

UNDERRATED SHOWS
STARRING THE
UNDERREPRESENTED

THEO BECERRA



Set in Glasgow in 1994, “Takin’ Over the Asylum” is a six part series focusing on the lives of patients in the Mental Health sector of St. Judes Hospital. As a sidenote and content warning, this show, despite being overall uplifting and fun, deals with rather dark and real topics apart from mental illness, like suicide. Still, it portrays them with delicacy. The main character, Eddie, is a weary ex-professional DJ who is roped into restarting the hospital radio station. The other main character is Campbell, a manic depressive teenager with big dreams and quite the imagination. Together as a dynamic duo of sorts, the tired and world weary DJ and the golden retriever teen, they restart the radio station. They receive help from various other patients and together they become a found family in the messy lives they all lead.

Eddie had preconceived notions about the patients and their illnesses but also an open mind and saw them for the people they were beneath the surface. He acts as a narrative device for the audience to insert themselves in his place, but also as a comparison to the fine line of sanity. Campbell even goes as far to say, “He isn’t a patient though he ought to be.” As for the characters themselves, they are all equally represented, as each episode goes into their own conflicts and lives. They each have a different illness and the show really brings to light just how difficult and complicated it is to live with. And although Campbell holds the role of comic relief, the show never makes fun of him for his illness, but instead gives him a complex character and purpose to the plot.

The show even highlights the negativity and harassment many people with mental illness face in their daily lives. Even in the safety of the hospital walls, the protagonists and their friends still feel hate from a member of the nursing staff, who acts as the bad cop to the other kind nurses.

The creator of the show, Donna Franceschild, is bipolar herself and wanted there to be a piece of media that represented her, and others who also suffer from mental health issues. Her biography from the script adaptation of the show reads, “(she) is very proud of her work on the series.” The show itself has won numerous awards such as the 1994 Bafta for Best Drama Serial and the Mental Health Media Award for Best TV Drama. These only go to show how well written and acted this brilliant show is.

“Takin’ Over the Asylum” dives into the messy reality of life and how not everything has a perfect answer. This is truly such a beautiful show that not only showcases different people as, well, actual people, but gives the audience a better understanding of those suffering from mental illnesses in a kind and informative way. It is a touching story of friendship in the most unlikely of places.

Andrew Regan:
Tech and advocacy

BY NOA OSLER-CAHN
staff writer

Given Berkeley’s history of progressivism and organizing, it is not uncommon to encounter students at Berkeley High School who are passionate about activism and social justice. While certain acts of social justice are more pronounced than others, students are constantly integrating their beliefs and skills into impactful school assignments and external actions.

BHS senior Andrew Regan is a powerful example of the latter. In the summer of 2024, Regan began working on creating a website alongside other students as part of the Stanford Neurodiversity Project. The Stanford Neurodiversity Project is a two-week long summer camp for high school students across the United States to learn about neurodiversity advocacy and the science behind neurodiversity.

Neurodiversity is a relatively new concept and term. It regards the range of different brain functions and behavioral traits that people have. Being neurodiverse is extremely common. According to Stanford

Medicine, the Neurodiversity movement is about “uncovering the strengths of neurodiverse individuals and utilizing their talents to increase innovation and productivity of the society as a whole.”

Regan’s final project at the camp was a website titled The Neuroscope. “It’s meant to serve as a handbook and a resource full of digestible information that kids and adults can use to educate themselves about the complicated topic of neurodiversity,” Regan said. But after the program was complete, Regan chose to make some changes to The Neuroscope. “I decided to completely redesign the handbook by gathering and leading a team of student researchers and programmers to code the website from scratch,” Regan said.

Regan initially got involved with neurodiversity education to learn more about members of his family. This in turn ignited his passion for neuroscience, which started to shape the way Regan viewed his goal in activism. “Often, there are negative stereotypes associated with Special Education and neurodiversity, because certain differences



Regan hopes to improve neurodiversity awareness. DANIELA SIERRA ROMERO

in neurological function can make it more difficult for people to navigate the world we live in,” Regan said.

Regan’s journey in the world of social justice didn’t end with coding an educational website. For the website to have a clear effect at BHS, in his community, and in other people’s lives, he decided to go a step further. “I’m also currently collaborating with members in the district, including the Executive Director of Special Education to distribute the website as the primary neurodiversity resource for BUSD’s second annual Disabilities Awareness Month,” Regan said.

Overall, Regan’s involvement in social justice centers around the action of educating others. “From my point of view, understanding gives rise to connection and respect,” Regan said, “Once

BHS begins to understand how people fundamentally experience and interact with the world in different ways, we will become more connected.”

As much as Regan has accomplished, he recognized that there are some challenges involved in activism. “A core part of effecting change is putting yourself out there in front of other people. This is something I definitely struggle with because I prefer to listen rather than speak,” Regan said, “If you’re like me, you’ll be scared in the moment, but proud once you’ve done it.”

His advice for others who are looking to make a difference in their communities is tied to his past experiences and achievements. “The scarier it is, the more people you’ll reach and the bigger impact you’ll create,” Regan said.

WORD ON THE STREET

WHAT ARE YOUR NEW YEAR’S RESOLUTIONS?



“My New Year’s resolutions involve making myself a better person, step by step,” Akanni Owodunni, a Berkeley High School junior, said. “Instead of making huge goals to follow or shoot for, I hold myself to small actions that will ultimately lead me to the achievement of these goals,” Owodunni continued.



BHS sophomore Kyle Pakes shared how he actually made two New Year’s resolutions — goals that Pakes wants to meet in 2025. “My first New Year’s resolution is to go to the gym and to start working out,” Pakes said, “My second new year’s resolution is to get all my grades up.” In terms of physical wellness, Pakes hopes to not only focus on exercise, but also nutrition.

INTERVIEWS BY TEJAL DOPMAN
staff writer



Sachi Chakko, a freshman at BHS, described her New Year’s resolution. “To find joy in the small things and let go of things that don’t matter,” Chakko said. According to Chakko, she has adopted the perspective that it is better to just let it go than to give attention to something that doesn’t hold real significance.



Syuzanna Shyroyan, a senior at BHS, focused her New Year’s resolutions on the fact that she is now a senior. “My New Year’s resolution is to participate in as many senior activities as possible and attend prom,” Shyroyan said, “and of course (to) not forget to study.” Although she wants to have fun during her last year of high school, for her, academics are still a priority.

PHOTOS BY MAREN MATTHEWS
staff photographer

Ace your SAT: Top tips for mastering the standardized test

BY SAYA JAMESON
staff writer

For the 2 million students taking the SAT every year, the test looms as an essential milestone on the road to college. Despite a tide of test-optional policies in the college admissions process, many students still opt to take the test as a component in the admissions process. Preparing for the exam can feel daunting, but with the right strategies and mindset, you can maximize your score and approach test day with confidence. Here are some tips from upperclassmen at Berkeley High School on how to ace the test:

1. Familiarize yourself

The SAT is a predictable test, so familiarity is key. Take the time to understand the test’s structure, timing, and question types. The exam consists of two sections: Reading and Writing, and Math. By knowing what to expect, you can reduce test-day anxiety and improve your time management. Specifically, knowing what resources are available to you during the test, such as the Desmos calculator and reading assistance tools, is crucial.

“I didn’t realize how much easier the SAT would feel once I really understood the test format and the tools available, like the Desmos calculator,” Vivien Silas, a BHS senior, said, “The more familiar I became with the question types and timing, the more confident I felt.”

2. Use official practice tests

There’s no better way to prepare than by using official SAT practice tests available on the College Board website. These tests mirror the actual exam and provide valuable insights into your strengths and weaknesses. You can also test out the specific tools that the College Board will offer on the official test, unlike in most third-party websites!

3. Adopt the two-pass strategy

Just like with most tests, a key strategy is to begin with the questions you can quickly solve, then move onto the ones that take more time. Especially because all questions within a subject are weighted equally, allocating your time effectively to get as many answers as possible is key.

“Since there’s no penalty for getting a question wrong, a great strategy for me was knocking out all the ones I could solve quickly first,” Max Glater-Chacon, a BHS junior, said. “The last thing you want is to realize you spent too much time on a long question and ended up missing the easier ones.”

4. Build your vocabulary

A strong vocabulary is still critical for understanding Reading and Writing questions. Incorporate vocabulary-building tools, such as flashcards or apps, into your daily routine. Take a look at the 100 most common SAT words.

“The SAT tends to recycle some of the same vocabulary words year after year,” BHS senior Isabella Rodriguez said, “It’s a huge advantage to know key vocabulary, then pair it with contextual evidence.”

5. Targeted practice is key

Having trouble in one section in particular? Do targeted practice to maximize your time using Khan Academy, Bluebook, and other free resources available online.

Nick Eichinger, a senior at BHS, said, “For me, the Reading and Writing section felt a lot easier than the Math. I spent more time working on Math and specifically on the hardest topics for me, like geometry.”

6. Annotate for speed in reading

To save time and stay focused, develop a habit of annotating as you read. Underline or circle key phrases, names, dates, and transitions that signal shifts in tone or argument. Write short notes in the margins to summarize main ideas or important details. This approach helps you avoid re-reading entire sections and makes it easier to locate information when answering questions. By actively engaging with the text, you can improve both your speed and comprehension.

“Annotating makes such a difference. It helps you stay focused, remember the key information, and saves you from having to re-read everything later,” Sarah Jane Hoverman, a BHS senior, said.

Preparing for the SAT takes dedication and strategy, but it’s a challenge you can conquer. By focusing on consistent practice and self-improvement, you’ll be well on your way to achieving your target score.

Consumerism vs creation: The importance of thoughtful gifts

BY AUBREY CASPER
staff writer

“I made a spoon for someone’s birthday at one point. I don’t do wood working usually, (but) he’s into cooking, so (I made) him a serving spoon,” said Maisy Matthews, a Berkeley High School junior, “I did that, and I hand carved it.”

Matthews has made many unconventional gifts for friends and family since she started crafting. These include shirts with sewed decorations, ceramic mugs, stained glass pieces, burnt CDs, prints, screen-printed items, zines, and Matthews is currently working on making a leather bag and tattooing it.

“I literally spent like 10 hours making this and I didn’t do any classwork for two weeks just so I could make (them) this shirt,” Matthews said.

Although gifts are given year round, the holidays are often associated with gift giving. Many opt to give classic store-bought items, while others select to give gift cards. In fact, Americans are spending more on holiday gifts than ever before. According to CBS,

Americans were predicted to spend 7% more money than last year on the holidays, which translated to a whopping average of \$2100.

However, everyone gifts a little differently — some decide to spend little or no money for the holidays, instead choosing to give something creative or heartfelt.

“My favorite unconventional gift is baking baked goods for my friends, because I think that it really shows that I care about them,” Lex Davis, a BHS freshman, said.

“For me at least, (a homemade gift) is a greater symbol of love than if I just got someone a Target gift card.”

Lex Davis
BHS freshman

According to Davis, her favorites to make are the “classics,” like brownies and cookies. She loves her friends’ reactions when she gives them the sweets, and really enjoys the process of baking.

“It gives me something to do with my day, and just like spending time on a gift instead of just going out and buying something, (it) really makes it

feel like I care about them a lot more,” Davis said.

In addition to making gifts, some people like to give gifts that hit a little closer to home. Phil Halpern, a Video Production teacher at BHS, planned to give away two split leaf philodendron plants.

“The one that’s going to my eldest child is to celebrate the fact that he just applied to graduate school to become a social worker,” Halpern said, “and the one I’ve given to my parents is as a remembrance of my dad’s older brother, Jim, who just died.”

Halpern grew the plants for several years each. They both started as cuttings of a philodendron that his mother-in-law gave to his wife when she was 18 to commemorate her going off to college.

“I love these two particular plants, and they’re better than a gift card to Target for me,” Halpern said.

However, Halpern doesn’t think there’s anything inherently negative about giving a gift card or a less unconventional thing; he tries to give whatever he thinks the person wants or needs.

“I mean, gift cards make sense to me, and I can strive to

empathize with the person and see what might work for them in terms of their interests, hobbies or needs,” Halpern said, “(Brake pads are) not really like a cool gift, but maybe money towards brake pads is what my kid wants most. These are the kinds of factors that I try to think about when I’m choosing.”

Meanwhile, for Davis, while gift cards show the receiver that you’re thinking about them, it doesn’t show that you put time and effort into making something for

them.

“For me at least, (a homemade gift) is a greater symbol of love than if I just got someone a Target gift card,” Davis said. “That’s nice too, but it’s in a different way.”

Matthews also felt that homemade gifts are more meaningful, especially because she really likes putting time into making something for someone.

“I think it’s mostly about the thought that goes into it,” Matthews said, adding that it’s equally touching to her if

someone remembers something she said she liked. For example, someone remembering an offhand comment she made about a certain band she likes and then buying her something related to it, like a t-shirt or CD.

Regardless of what he gives, Halpern “certainly (gets) a lot of satisfaction from those rare inspired moments where you get it just right for somebody.” There’s a lot of ways to show appreciation for loved ones year round — all that matters is being thoughtful.



A holiday gift made by BHS junior Maisy Matthews. SYLVA ROUBINIAN

ENTERTAINMENT

ENTERTAINMENT EDITORS: AMAR WALKER & ANNIKA JOY

AMARWALKER@STUDENTS.BERKELEY.NET

CAN DUOLINGO BE CONSIDERED A FORM OF SOCIAL MEDIA?

CHLOE PRENDERGAST



Do you have Duolingo? Honestly I would be impressed if you've never downloaded the app. Almost every person I know has or had Duolingo, myself included. I've been noticing that more recently Duolingo has gotten a lot of popularity on social media for its signature green owl and trendy humor. However, can we consider Duolingo a social media app of its own?

Duolingo was founded in 2011 by professor Louis von Ahn and Severin Hacker. They believed that free education could change the world and they wanted to make it accessible to all. Duolingo offers 44 language courses, including endangered ones like Navajo, Irish and Welsh. Duolingo is known for their mascot, the classic green owl, Duo, along with a cast of other characters. This definitely makes their platform more interesting than other language learning apps.

Why is Duolingo so popular? I think we should start with an obvious reason, it's free! Yes, I'm aware that you can subscribe to get more features on Duolingo, but you don't have to and that makes it really accessible opposed to their competitors like Babbel where a six month subscription is \$594! Another reason for Duolingo's success is their social media presence. During the pandemic Duolingo gained a huge surge in popularity because their marketing team had the bright idea of making videos on TikTok and other social media apps. Their videos combine whatever is trending and their signature green owl.

I know that I'm addicted to my streak. Not to brag but I have an over 300 day streak, but that's nothing compared to my friends that have 800 day streaks. What makes these streaks so addictive? At some point the number of days gets so high that you just can't let it go. It also doesn't help that there's a green owl threatening you to do your lesson. Even though it's a comedic choice some of the notifications that Duolingo sends are quite dark, for example "You missed your Spanish lesson, you know what happens now."

Back to my original question of whether Duolingo is a social media, what makes an app considered social media? A social media app is a platform where people can connect and create things online. There are no Duolingo influencers, but you can follow people on Duolingo, and compete in timed challenges against your friends. So in my opinion Duolingo isn't a social media app but rather a social education platform.

I would definitely recommend Duolingo if you want to learn a language, especially if it's one that's not offered at school. Duolingo mastered being trendy, comedic and engaging. Just don't forget to do your lessons or Duo will come after you!

African Diaspora dance showcase dazzles

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

the teachers, such as the shows' executive director and head teacher, Dr. Dawn Williams, known by her students as Doc Dub.

"We ask our students to brainstorm themes, and because they had been learning pieces that reflected the idea of passing on wisdom, they gravitated toward this theme," Williams said, "We spend a lot of time building relationships in the class. We figure out what kinds of personalities and strengths we have in our classes and then we select pieces and design choreography around them. We try to highlight student strengths."

The two hour show certainly highlighted the many talents within the AFAM Dance classes, where each performer could shine in their different sections, whether it was the dedicated drum section, the solos, or the more modern pieces. The show consisted of an opening prayer dance, coming of age pieces, storytelling, and celebration dances. Some of the knowledge being shared through the performance was deep and critical, with one of the opening pieces calling out America for the reparations the country owes to many communities. The performance

really spoke to the amount of practice that went into it. It was clear the dancers had the choreography down, and they were able to have fun with it. With the large venue, dedicated educators, and countless skilled performers, the showcase was beyond the scope of what one would expect from a high school production.

"It's a good learning experience for an African American perspective on dancing, and it helped inspire me to do more on stage, and built my confidence," BHS senior Manny Lane-Scott said, "I loved the little details put into the show. Every dance I was in was fun, and even though it took a lot of time for our class to learn all the dances, it turned out great."

All of this work leads to a very uplifting community on and off of the stage. Williams' students described the community as confidence-inspiring, where everyone has each other's backs. Dancers gravitating towards this theme of gaining and giving knowledge demonstrates the real respect and positive relationships between the students and educators. The poster for the show, made by Maria Sanchez, carries this respect, with the silhouettes of former AFAM Dance teachers being central to the piece.



Dancers perform in the Community Theater. JAHAN INGRAHAM

After her epic rise, will Chappell Roan fall?



SAWYER M.B. ERCH

BY SORAYA JUNE BERENT
staff writer

Throughout 2024, there were many artists that quickly gained popularity, such as Charli XCX with "BRAT." But no artist rose to fame as quickly as Chappell Roan, whose album "The Rise and Fall of a Midwest Princess" hit No. 2 on the Billboard top 100, with songs like "Good Luck, Babe!" climbing up to No. 4 and "HOT TO GO!" reaching No. 15. Roan's career took off extremely quickly after her album release, with many public appearances

on talk shows such as the Tonight Show with Jimmy Fallon, performing as an opener in Olivia Rodrigo's GUTS Tour, and even headlining her own tour. However, her quick rise to fame came alongside some controversy, and Roan's career has gone through highs and lows during her short time in the public eye.

Berkeley High School senior Olivia Nguyen feels that although Roan's presence sometimes feels overdone, her self expression seems genuine. "I think her art is more of a projection of the identity she's created for herself. There's a level of

falseness that's bound to exist with a persona — that's exactly what being a performer is. There's certainly a marketing aspect that can make it feel gimmicky, but I feel her art still stands as a simple form of self expression," Nguyen said.

Recently, Roan has gone viral for yelling at a reporter on the red carpet for Olivia Rodrigo's GUTS Tour movie. She recalled the reporter being rude in a past encounter, and demanded an apology from him. She had to be moved down the carpet due to the altercation becoming extremely heated. This is not the only time Roan has made controversial decisions that gained attention online. Roan refused to endorse Kamala Harris in the 2024 Presidential Election, prompting media backlash. She had stated that although she would vote for Harris, she wouldn't endorse her because "there's problems on both sides," which sparked criticism from many of her fans.

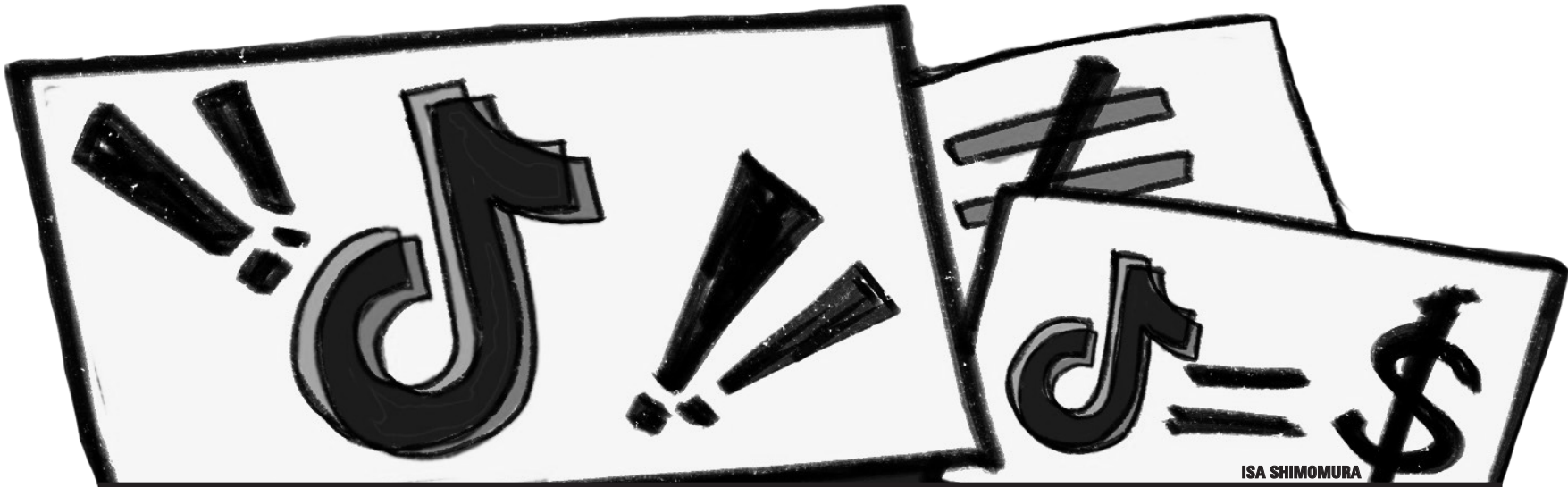
Additionally, back in Au-

gust of 2024, Roan made a TikTok explaining that she didn't want her fans aggressively asking for photos, referring to them as stalkers. BHS freshman Amaris Sotorosen finds that Roan's reaction to her publicity has not been the best.

"I think that's kind of unprofessional. Like, I get the need for (privacy), but there's a lot of better ways to go about it," Sotorosen said.

While Roan has been inconsistent with her public appearance, it seems like the buzz around her is starting to slow down. BHS freshman Maia Wilsey believes she will reduce the extremity of her decisions sometime in the near future. "I think she is just new to fame and might not be handling it the best, but over time she will learn," Wilsey said.

Considering her recent rash decisions and actions, we are left to speculate whether Roan will choose to continue expressing herself in the same way or if she will tamp down in order to regain public favor.



Looming TikTok ban pivotal for younger generations

CECILIA TILES
staff writer

It feels impossible to imagine a world without TikTok; the massively popular social media app which skyrocketed to fame in early 2019. Currently with 1.6 billion active users per month, it is the fifth most popular social media app, behind applications including Facebook and Instagram. TikTok has become an incredibly enjoyable and hooking pastime for millions of different Americans.

“It is addicting,” Berkeley High School freshman Xavier Banuelas said, “If you see something you like, you’ll keep scrolling to search for something else you like, because it’s not very long and it’s not boring. So you’ll keep searching for more and more.”

It has even developed into a source of employment for over 70,000 people, in addition to those who create videos and make a livable wage off of content creation. But regardless of the benefits of TikTok, the U.S. is seriously pursuing a bill which would ultimately ban the usage of TikTok in the U.S.

The process began in September 2020, when President Donald Trump announced that his administration was considering a ban on TikTok. Content creators and users alike were publicly unhappy, protesting the announcement that would impact its (at the time) over 400 million active users. And even though that action failed, in the last four years such attempts to ban or limit the app have taken place under

the Biden Administration. Since February 2023, Biden has banned TikTok on federal devices and has sought to move other similar bills into Congress.

In March of 2024, the House of Representatives voted on and passed a bill which requires ByteDance, the parent company which owns TikTok, to either sell TikTok or have it be banned in all U.S. app stores. Then, in April, Biden signed the bill into law. Despite multiple appeals and court appearances, with ByteDance citing the first amendment and claiming that the law is in violation of the free speech clause, all of ByteDance’s attempts to overturn the decision have been denied. And in face of ByteDance’s attempt to take their battle to the Supreme Court, unless ByteDance makes the decision to sell TikTok, distribution companies like Apple and Google have been warned that they must stop hosting TikTok on their app stores starting Sunday, Jan. 19, 2025.

According to the bill, a ban doesn’t necessarily mean an immediate removal of the app. But rather, a slow forced degeneration of TikTok which would essentially render the app unusable. As mentioned before, if and when the law begins, tech companies will no longer be allowed to distribute the app, which means that TikTok will no longer be able to gain any more new users. The bill also indicates that TikTok will no

longer be allowed to be updated, and with no upkeep the platform will eventually become unusable. According to the U.S. government, this ban is for good reason.

“Whatever the reasoning is, as a whole, the banning of TikTok, is an overall negative thing to happen to our generation. Because I know a lot of people do find comfort in the app,” BHS sophomore Willa Bender said.

The rationale the Biden Administration has for the ban is one of “national security.” ByteDance, which is a Chinese company, greatly concerns lawyers and governmental officials here in the U.S. According to recent investigations conducted in March of 2023, FBI reports that the Chinese government are likely using TikTok as a way to access private user data. Lawmakers worry that the Chinese government will force ByteDance to hand over all of the user data which has been accumulated in the last eight years. Due to the high personalization aspect that TikTok has, it has been noted that TikTok collects more personal data than most other social media apps. Including users location, devices, content, and typing and engagement patterns. Critics have suggested the Chinese government

could use this data to monitor civilians, spread false information, and commit other criminal attacks all under the cover of TikTok.

“The United States does not want a Chinese company being very popular in the United States and having all these videos of us,” BHS sophomore Asha Bui said, “But I think that it’s actually not that big of a deal.”

And even though TikTok’s CEO Shou Zi Chew has tried to distance himself and ByteDance as much as he can, U.S. lawmakers just don’t have enough confidence that national security isn’t at risk. Worries have only escalated after other countries like India and the U.K., have also enacted similar bans.

Nonetheless, there are still many people who are fighting the U.S. government’s decision on TikTok’s fate. Protestors are hoping to delay the impending ban on Sunday, Jan. 19, 2025, on the

belief that President-Elect Donald Trump, who has since reversed his opinion on the topic, will save TikTok when he returns

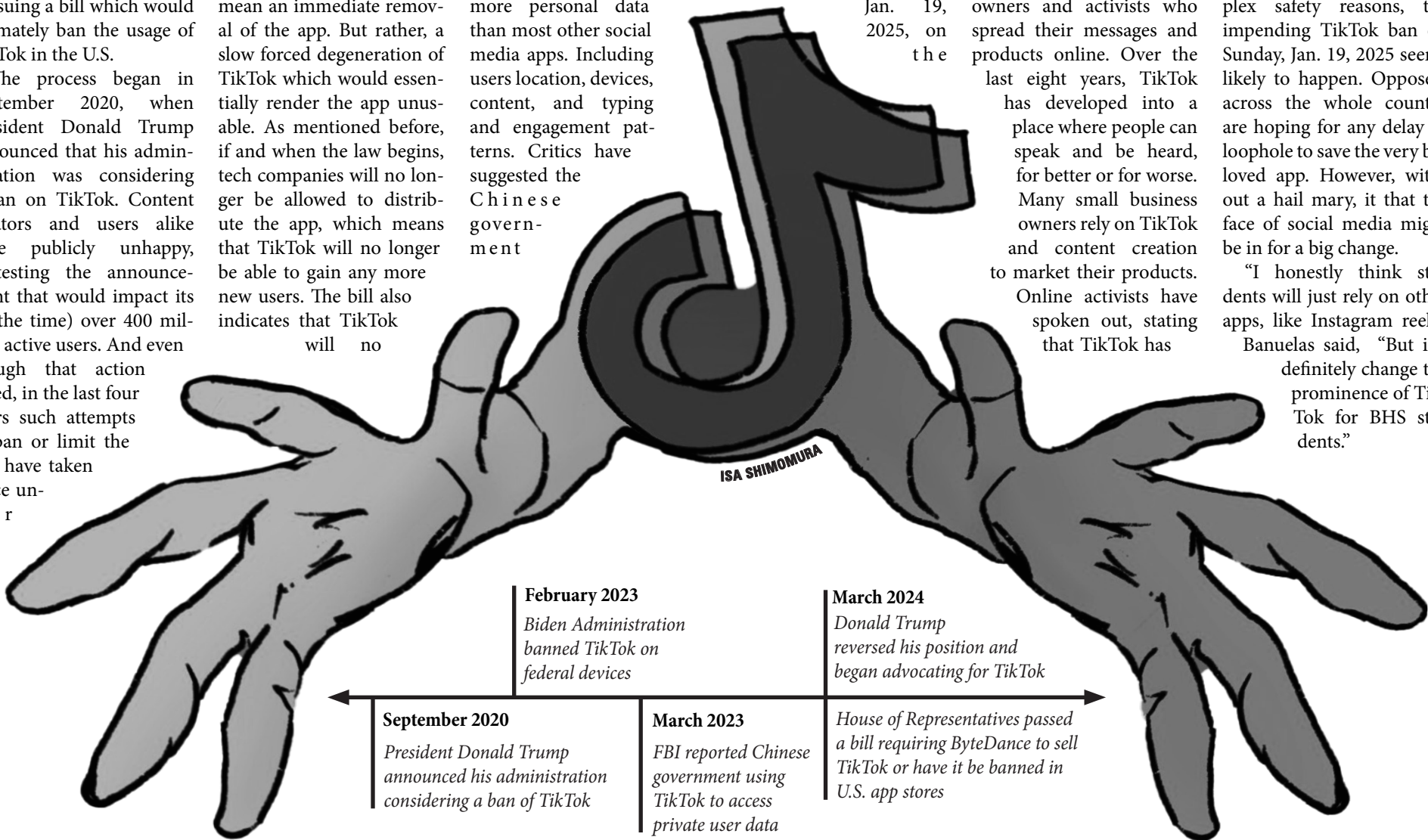
to office. Ironically, Trump and Vance’s inauguration date is set for Monday, Jan. 20, 2025. Opposers feel strongly that the banning of TikTok will greatly impact thousands of small business owners and activists who spread their messages and products online. Over the last eight years, TikTok has developed into a place where people can speak and be heard, for better or for worse. Many small business owners rely on TikTok and content creation to market their products. Online activists have spoken out, stating that TikTok has

been a platform for them to speak out against ableism, racism, homophobia, and more. They feel that the banning of TikTok would be limiting their right to speak freely on their opinions to a wide and diverse audience. TikTok has also been a source of connection for many people. Much like Instagram, people can create bonds and relationships with people online.

“I definitely think a lot of people find a sense of community. and kind of like self-expression within the app,” Bender said. But still, there are negative aspects of TikTok that aren’t just about national security. In a February study, it was found that around 22 percent of U.S. teenagers spend between two to three hours a day on TikTok. TikTok can be incredibly addicting, and has been shown to negatively affect the brains of users, especially teenagers.

For a multitude of complex safety reasons, the impending TikTok ban on Sunday, Jan. 19, 2025 seems likely to happen. Opposers across the whole country are hoping for any delay or loophole to save the very beloved app. However, without a hail mary, it that the face of social media might be in for a big change.

“I honestly think students will just rely on other apps, like Instagram reels,” Banuelas said, “But it’ll definitely change the prominence of TikTok for BHS students.”



Eggers’ ‘Nosferatu’ adaptation exceeds eerie expectations

BY ELI LEICHTER WILSON
staff writer

It stirred much anticipation when Robert Eggers announced that he would be creating an adaptation of the 1922 silent vampire film “Nosferatu”. Through his previous projects, “The Witch” (2015) and “The Lighthouse” (2019), Eggers has built a reputation for creating terrifying and atmospheric films with a focus on myth, folklore, and the occult. Simply put, Eggers and Nosferatu were a match made in heaven. The 2024 adaptation follows Count Orlok (Bill Skarsgård), or Nosferatu, a vampire who preys upon Ellen (Lily-Rose Depp), the wife of a real estate agent (Nicholas Hoult) and brings a plague to their small German town. Eggers’ adaptation remains largely faithful to the original, while making the story far more palatable to modern audiences. The 1922 film relies heav-

ily on drawn-out, lingering sequences to build atmosphere, but this often causes it to drag. Eggers trims much of the excess, resulting in a more dynamic film despite its longer runtime. He also significantly expands Ellen’s storyline. Eggers’ Ellen is a character with agency, depth and history, a far cry from her passive, one-note predecessor. With more development of her character, previously disjointed plot points come together neatly and with an impact they had not had before. Due to the changes, the new “Nosferatu” is considerably more tragic and compelling, bringing needed emotion to a classic tale. What sticks out most about the film, though, is its visual style. Like “The Lighthouse”, “Nosferatu” pays close attention to the shadows. Despite largely taking place at night, there is never an issue with visibility, unlike in many recent movies. This is because the darkness in “Nosferatu” is meant to

be seen. It is a character in and of itself, both concealing Orlok and eliciting a primal fear of the dark and unknown from which the film derives its true horror. For this reason, the film is often most effective when nothing is happening, when the tension builds from what might emerge rather than what is explicitly shown. It is not all dark, though; scenes are illuminated by beautifully serene moonlight, which reveals only what’s necessary. The parallel use of moonlight and shadow, with almost no color involved, create an enchanting atmosphere that both preserves the film’s gothic feel and subtly nods to its silent-era source material. If the visual style draws you in, the performances seal the deal. Lily-Rose Depp is the highlight, tackling the high emotion and demanding physicality of her role with ease. She is the film’s emotional center and easily its most interest-

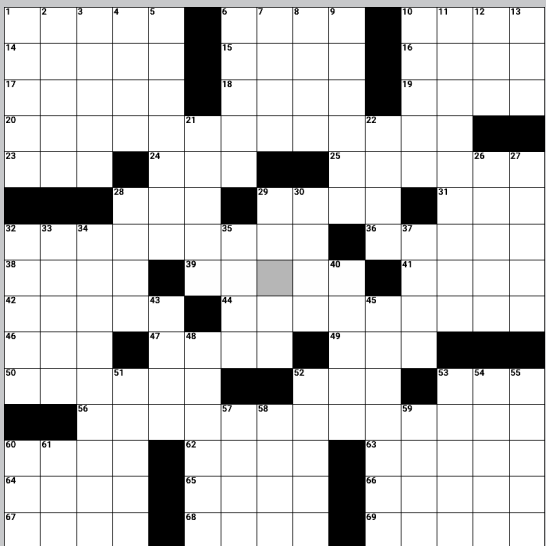


COURTESY OF FOCUS FEATURES

ing character. Skarsgård is excellent, as well. He truly disappears into the role of Count Orlok; you could search for hours and find no trace of his face or voice in the character. Skarsgård has traditionally done his best work as practical-effects-monsters (see his performances in “It” and “It: Chapter Two”) and his role in “Nosferatu” is no different. He plays a vampire that is distinctly different from most Draculas. Whereas the average movie vampire tends to be something like a tall, classy mostly-hu-

man with slicked, widow-peaked hair and Victorian dress, Orlok is disgusting. He looks like a corpse. He is bloated in some places, emaciated in others, covered in boils and scars. He is death and disease incarnate, far closer to a vampire of European folklore rather than the seductive creature of Gothic literature. As Orlok, Skarsgård reminds us why vampires are feared. The rest of the cast is nothing to scoff at, either. Willem Dafoe is an eccentric doctor and occultist nutjob, and Nicholas Hoult carries the film’s first act with incredibly believable terror and bewilderment. There is no campiness in what he’s doing; his fear comes off as 100 percent real rather than theatrical. “Nosferatu” is everything a remake should be. It pays homage to its original and preserves its essence while taking the story in new directions. With his fourth feature film, Eggers proves that he is one of the most exciting directors of the generation, and “Nosferatu” suggests that his best work may be yet to come.

THE CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- 1. “To repeat...”
- 6. “Moby-Dick” captain
- 10. Actor known for his baggy clothes
- 14. Like ice cream in Italy
- 15. Chip’s bud
- 16. Hotel employee
- 17. Coolly distant
- 18. Old-timey “oh no”
- 19. Sickneses
- 20. Person never seen in the same room as Miley Cyrus
- 23. Corp.
- 24. Arts and tech-focused small school
- 25. Cooks with direct heat
- 28. Off-road automobile
- 29. _____, BIV
- 31. Flat back muscle
- 32. Words after eating a ghost pepper
- 36. 44th president
- 38. “Strega _____” (1970s picture book)
- 39. _____ Sans
- 41. Country east of Yemen
- 42. Chip used in a “walking taco”
- 44. _____ Confessional (’00s rock band)
- 46. Quick channel for information?
- 47. Singer-songwriter Baez
- 49. Acorn-producing tree
- 50. Popular white sneaker
- 52. Help
- 53. Suffix on a calendar in fall
- 56. Chicken out
- 60. Beach toy accompanied by a shovel
- 62. Make money
- 63. “The Waste Land” poet
- 64. A year, in Rome
- 65. Like a pancake
- 66. Chocolate factory owner
- 67. Falls behind
- 68. Slippery sea creatures
- 69. Leering smirk

DOWN

- 1. State of potatoes?
- 2. Sunny energy
- 3. Together (with)
- 4. Profile picture
- 5. “In effect”
- 6. President John (Quincy)
- 7. Angelic topper
- 8. Actor Rickman
- 9. Date before the milk expires
- 10. Protein (acid)
- 11. Head monk, in Buddhism
- 12. Feel poorly
- 13. Doctors
- 21. Chaos
- 22. Jason’s ship, in myth
- 26. One of Drake’s rap rivals
- 27. What you can do on your hands or feet
- 28. Rat-_____
- 29. Caesar, for one
- 30. Singer Redding
- 32. Deduce
- 33. Rich, dense cake
- 34. Whining
- 35. “Today” co-host Kotb
- 37. Anthology or novel
- 40. What one preaches to?
- 43. Spanish eyes
- 45. It’s often broken gently
- 48. Artist Georgia
- 51. Ties for cowboys
- 52. Parents’ sisters
- 53. Pickling liquid
- 54. Bring out
- 55. Fix a roof, for example
- 57. Rory Gilmore’s dream college
- 58. Report given in front of the class
- 59. Owner of X and Space X
- 60. Bud
- 61. Actress de Armas
- 62. Dull color
- 65. Word for direct
- 66. Relating to the subject

— Violet Kessler

Underrated must-watches

— Alessio Gilabert-Papagni

“Bottle Rocket”

Leo Hancock, a junior at Berkeley High School, spoke of “Bottle Rocket,” a movie he considers very underrated and a “hilarious movie with good acting and a good plot.” “Bottle Rocket” was directed by Wes Anderson and stars Owen and Luke Wilson. Fun fact: “Bottle Rocket” was Wes Anderson’s first film. Despite the movie only grossing a little over 10 percent of its \$5 million budget, making only around \$500,000, a considerable amount of talent and effort was put into the movie, resulting in the creation of a hidden treasure.

“Derry Girls”

“It is hilarious, sweet, and lighthearted and I wish more people knew about it,” BHS sophomore June Ruyle said. “Derry Girls”, set in Northern Ireland in the 1990s, is a coming-of-age comedy that follows the daily life of a group of teenage girls. The show authentically portrays teenage life by showing awkward moments as well as exhilarating ones, creating a humorous and heartwarming mood. While “Derry Girls” received some criticism for its production quality in the final season, you should still definitely give this show a shot.

“The Midnight Gospel”

BHS junior Ash Kloczek believes the show deserves much more attention than it is getting. “People don’t think it’s bad, I just think it’s unknown,” Kloczek said. Duncan Trussell’s podcast is combined with Pendleton Ward’s dreamlike visual art, exploring topics of death, religion, and other profound themes. A show like this one has the opportunity of taking the viewer on a mystical thoughtful journey if they are willing to give it a try. Niche shows are often focused on quality and complexity, which shines through in “The Midnight Gospel.”



ALISA KARIN KOLPAKOVA

Girls soccer team loses to Carondelet in high energy game

BY CID FRYDMAN
staff writer

On the night of Friday, Dec. 20, 2024, the Berkeley High School girls varsity soccer team faced off against Carondelet High School in a thrilling matchup displaying hard work and determination from both teams. Players from opposing teams showed all their hard work on the field.

The match started with high energy as both teams fought over control of the ball. BHS came out especially strong with players stealing the ball and chasing the ball down from Carondelet players. During the first half, players from both teams pushed themselves to take shots on goals, connect passes and work cohesively as a defensive and offensive unit. In preparation for the game, BHS senior

defender Autumn Dalton said, “Our coaches watched a lot of film and would tell us about their tactical play. And in practices, we really worked on what (Carondelet) did last year and how to

prepare for them, especially on defense.”

The first half continued with Carondelet applying heavy pressure, forcing Berkeley to focus on defense. BHS defenders, led by Dalton, worked diligently to combat Carondelet’s fast offense. Dalton said, “They were a really quick team, so we kind of held a defensive block. We held back more so that we could stop them from making fast runs.” As Carondelet controlled ball possession, BHS’ defensive strategy stopped any goals from happening and ended the first half in a scoreless tie. BHS sophomore midfielder Amaya Tomikawa recalled the team’s prepara-

massive offensive jump from BHS and Carondelet, and effective moves and strategies took place. Head Coach John Tamrat reflected on the strong offensive plays saying, “I would say we were trying to find the wide player when we can, or making sure our nine (attacker) and 10 (attacking midfielder) can find those players. We did that well a couple times to an effect and it’s just the final phase of finishing the play off that was missing for us.” BHS forwards like sophomore Evita Escamilla Geisler, junior, and senior Chloe Caldwell ended the game with six shots on goal in total.

Despite BHS’ strong defensive efforts in the first half, with roughly 30 minutes left in the second quarter, a Carondelet striker scored bringing the score to 1-0 with Carondelet in the lead.

Looking back on the first goal, BHS junior and goalie Taylor Kelso noted, “I definitely would have made a different pass. I think the pass wide was not executed well and led to them getting a chance



Evita Escamilla Geisler takes player on one-v-one. TOSCANA GIRARD MAXON

“We played really well. I think the scoreboard doesn’t reflect the game that we had. I think we should be really proud of how we played.”

Taylor Kelso
BHS Soccer Goalie

tion, explaining, “We got to the field like an hour and a half before, and we set our goals, and then we warmed up, and talked about giving it our all.”

Halftime started with a

that they shouldn’t have had in the moment I had the most pressure. I think I panicked a little bit. And I should have calmed down and taken a second.” Only five minutes later a penalty kick was awarded for a Carondelet player, who took a free shot on goal at Kelso, and narrowly kicked the ball over the goal.

Undeterred, BHS put up a fight in the second half, and the ball was chased down on both sides of the court. With only three minutes left, another penalty kick was awarded to Carondelet. The entire stadium was on the

edge of their seats waiting for the kick to take place. As the whistle was blown and the ball flew through the air, Kelso jumped, but narrowly missed and another goal was scored for Carondelet, bringing the score to 0-2. BHS continued to fight for the remainder of the game and the final score was 0-2, a win for Carondelet.

Kelso summed up the team’s performance saying, “We played really well. I think the scoreboard doesn’t reflect the game that we had. I think we should be really proud of how we played.” Although they were out-

scored, the Jackets fought hard and showed determination and grit.

Coach Tamrat plans on using the outcome of this game as fuel and motivation for continuing this season with their heads up and the courage to take on difficult opponents. “The hope is that we carry that momentum and that confidence in our games moving forward and playing with that same intensity coming from the same approach, and not having fear of playing anyone regardless of their standing or who they are,” Tamrat said.

In the water before school: Pros and cons

BY LILA GENBERG
staff writer

After school hours are a prime time for Berkeley High School sports practices. Whether it be dribbling on the soccer field, shooting hoops in the Donahue Gym, or lifting weights in the weight room, athletes across BHS’ 29 school sanctioned sports are practicing constantly. One sport, water polo, which has both a boys and girls team at BHS, has a unique practice schedule. Athletes can be seen jumping into the pool early in the morning before school. Depending on the perspective,

this could be seen as a positive or negative.

Greyson Grubb Smith, a BHS sophomore on boys varsity water polo, sees morning practice as a positive. “I feel like it made me perform way better through the school day, and it kind of calmed me down,” Grubb Smith said. As someone that has a lot of energy, playing in the morning helped Grubb Smith relax himself and be able to better focus in class. Along with helping his concentration throughout the day, Grubb Smith feels that morning practices helped his team build connections. “Getting there, seeing all the boys in the morning, we’re

all tired, we’re all getting in the pool together, it’s a really fun time,” he said.

Venice Hockey, a sophomore at BHS who plays on the girls water polo team, had a different outlook towards morning practices. “I hated them,” she said. In her opinion, having to get up at 5:00 a.m. is often not positive and very taxing for student athletes. Balancing these early mornings with schoolwork and other commitments can also be difficult. Hockey stated, “I would do any reason to skip (morning practices) because they made me so exhausted and I couldn’t focus throughout the day.”

Juliet Distefano, a girls water polo player, recognized the downsides of morning practice, such as wet or chlorine damaged hair at school and early mornings. However, ultimately, Distefano found these early practices unexpectedly enjoyable. “It was kind of refreshing. I didn’t really think I was gonna like it, but it ended up being fun,” she said. Distefano also mentioned that the morning practices were usually less physically strenuous, focusing more on strength and conditioning rather than intense drills, which was a positive for her.

Overall, athletes have mixed views and experiences when it comes morning sports practices at BHS. For some, they’re a great way to bond with teammates and start the day on a productive note. For others, having to wake up before the sunrise can prove to be entirely unpleasant and impair one’s ability to stay focused and energized throughout the school day. Despite the downsides or high school athletes’ feelings regarding before school practices, they continue to show up everyday and work tirelessly, balancing an early morning athletic commitment with their academic schedules.



BHS senior Cece Lutz prepares to hurl the ball. QUINCY MORRIS-FRY

Upcoming Game Schedule:

Wednesday, January 15	Wrestling Duals (@ 4:00)
Thursday, January 16	Boys basketball vs. Piedmont (Frosh @ 4:30, JV @ 6, Varsity @ 7:30)
Friday, January 17	Girls soccer vs. Castro Valley (JV @ 4, Varsity @ 6:30)
Friday, January 17	Girl basketball vs. Mount Eden (Varsity @ 5:30)
Tuesday, January 21	Boys soccer vs. Bishop O’dowd (Frosh @ 4, JV @ 5:30, Varsity @ 7:30)
Thursday, January 23	Boys basketball vs. Castro Valley (JV @ 6:00, Varsity @ 7:30)



Beyond the scoreboard: The emotional toll of negative coaching

BY ALANA CORTES
staff writer

For many athletes, the community and culture built on a team is the most important part of their experience. The community and team culture can either foster an athlete’s love for their sport or drive them away. However, how these aspects are shaped rests heavily on how the team’s coach cultivates relationships and the environment. If a coach creates a toxic and stressful environment, it can end up overshadowing an athlete’s love for their sport.

Many athletes who experience a toxic coaching environment have either quit or been close to quitting. Kayla Topel is a Berkeley High School junior student athlete who has struggled with coaching focused on results rather than the player. She said, “I just feel that because of how much stress was put on me and other players to perform at our highest ability, the enjoyment of making mistakes and learning, which is such a big part of sports, and having that ability to grow was taken away.”

When an athlete’s autonomy and ability to make mistakes is supported by their coach, they are much more likely to grow and develop. “I always felt scared, I never felt like I was really learning because I was too afraid to make any mistakes. And for that reason, I feel that it took the love out

of being able to get better,” Topel said.

Being afraid to play and make mistakes stunts growth as both a player and person. Athletes deal with high stress in different ways, and when coaching style clashes with a player’s learning style it can result in a lack of growth from the player. Coaches may see less improvement on their team, and players can become more anxious during games.

Arson Ormsby is a BHS senior student athlete, and he loves his sport because of the escape it brings him. “It’s always been kind of an escape for me. So whenever times are just tough or I’m annoyed, I’ve always found that whenever I’m playing ... that somehow just all goes away. So being able to just play a sport that I love and have that happen is just great,” Ormsby said.

The times when Ormsby hasn’t had a good experience throughout a season has been impacted by the coaching. In the past, he has felt as if the team wasn’t set up for everyone to succeed together. “I’ve had a lot of

within his sport, but when issues occurred, he felt like “there wasn’t really a coach figure. I didn’t look forward to playing, which kind of made me sad too.”

Lilah Montoya, a BHS sophomore student athlete, puts an emphasis on students playing for themselves rather than their coach. “We wanted to play for our coach, and sometimes we didn’t even want to play for ourselves. It was always like, play just so you don’t get dropped, or be put on the bench,” Montoya said.

For her, this made her question why she was still playing and with a combination of circumstances pushing her away from the sport — she lost her passion for it. In particular, Montoya believes that the competition for playing time wasn’t set up in a healthy way that encouraged bonding, but rather it was set up in a way that fostered rivalry on the team.

Keanu Moss, a BHS junior student athlete, thinks constructive criticism from coaches is important. “I want them to be hard on me

so I get better, but I also want them to be supportive and actually help me get better. I feel like, last year, my coaching was kind of just telling me the obvious stuff and just yelling at me to do better instead of actually helping

me,” he said.

Moss emphasizes that many play high school sports for fun and to create friendships. Overly strict



MORAL WALKER

coaching can take the enjoyment out of practices and games, especially when players feel unsupported. “Just you know, worrying about making an error or messing up, because a lot of the stricter coaching comes from the coaches yelling at the kids for small errors,” Moss explained.

Nadine Fraser, a BHS sophomore and former athlete, spoke about how increased stress negatively impacts the experiences on a team. “It was just very stressful, once you’re on the team, you could never feel relaxed. You were always, constantly in the fear that you were going to be kicked off. I could never get out

of my head. If I went on, I would be so stressed about messing up that I never let myself actually play, so I wouldn’t do as well,” Fraser said.

Fraser appreciates a competitive environment and feels that it can help students improve as athletes, but also believes a supportive coach and team is integral.

“The community on the team is honestly the most important part, I love playing, and I love the competitiveness of it. But I think for me, it’s so important to have people that support you, and I think that above everything else, it’s something that I really enjoy doing,” Topel explained.

Sports teams with more tight knit players often function better and play with more cohesion. If coaches set up a team in a way that focuses on working together, the outcome on player’s mental health and skills will be positive and teammate bonds will improve. “I like having people that I can have a second family with,” Topel said.

Overall, poor or toxic coaching can push athletes away from sports. It is important that coaches put strong teammate relationships and respect first. Community, passion, and love for the sport are what fosters healthy relationships on sports teams.



USNEA MCEWEN

ZARIYAH KING

ATHLETE PROFILE

Leading on and off the court is Berkeley High School senior Zariyah King, who serves as both Student Body President and captain of the girls varsity basketball team. Since she was in the fourth grade, when King was first introduced to the sport, she knew she wanted to follow in the footsteps of her older brother who now plays professional basketball in Mexico. Before joining an organized team, King practiced with her brother, with him training her to become the player she is today. “I enjoy basketball partly because it’s like a connection with my brother ... Just like being around him, just spending that time with him was really special,” King shared. Balancing both roles of team captain and school president can be challenging, but King views these roles as an opportunity to grow as a leader. She explained how the two roles complement one another, allowing her to draw different leadership qualities from each experience. King cherishes the camaraderie and connection among the team, sharing, “It gets to be kind of a lot sometimes, but I always feel very privileged to lead such a great group of girls,” King said, “just like all the different energies and everything. We all get along with each other really well. It’s just an honor.”

— Miles Wise