



## Should social media companies have the right to censor media?

Between TikTok, Facebook, X, and Instagram, explore the pros and cons of censorship ability. Read more on **PAGE 6**

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SINCE 1912

# Baskets & Bodyslams

**BHS girls basketball vs. San Lorenzo PAGE 15**

BHS hosts wrestling duals PAGE 15

BHS boys basketball at [berkeleyhighjacket.com](http://berkeleyhighjacket.com)

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## FEATURES



# Celebrating Lunar New Year at BHS

**BY ALANA CORTES**  
*staff writer*

“Happy new year, may you have fortune and wealth, may all your hopes be fulfilled, and may you be healthy.” These four phrases are the center of any Lunar New Year celebration. Lunar New Year is often celebrated at the end of January or the beginning of February, this year it falls on Wednesday, Jan. 29. The holiday follows the lunar calendar. One

A lunar month is equal to one full moon cycle, which takes twenty nine days. One lunar year has twelve moon cycles, or twelve lunations. The Chinese zodiac calendar also plays an important role in the Lunar New Year. It consists of a twelve year cycle, one animal for every year. 2025 marks the sixth year in the zodiac calendar, the year of the snake.

Although the Lunar New Year originated from China, over centuries it has spread throughout **PAGE 9**

## INVESTIGATIVE

# Student burnout: A persistent problem

**BY MAIA ASTERA**  
*staff writer*

## SENIORITIS

Many high school students face pressure to perform academically in preparation for their future. A 2017 American Psychological Association (APA) survey on stress cited academics and getting into college as the most common sources of stress

for high school students. 83 percent identified school as a major stressor, and 69 percent identified college admissions and deciding what to do after high school as a cause of stress.

The term “senioritis” is common among seniors; it explains a decline in motivation that many students experience in their final year of high school. “You’re so close to being done

with the semester, but then there's so much stuff you have to do ... I feel like I don't ever want to do anything," Allison Toan, a Berkeley High School senior, said.

Towards the end of the semester and school year, many students find themselves feeling burnt out. Shannon Mueller, an AP, International Baccalaureate, and regular Biology teacher at BHS, has noticed that as the

year goes on, student burnout usually increases. “I definitely hear students saying that they’re stressed out because of their workload, and it’s a combination of that, I think, and expectations from outside sources to get into a good college”, Mueller said. Mueller also thinks that a lot of student burnout could be self imposed, with students trying to challenge themselves or overloading their schedule.

## ACADEMIC RIGOR

Junior and senior years are known to be the hardest for most students. Toan and Samuel Sutton are both seniors at BHS, and they agreed that their junior and senior year workload was much larger than their freshman and sophomore year. Eleventh grade is typically when more high-rigor classes become available to most students, and schedules become more customizable for different workloads.

Mueller has noticed that many of her AP and IB biology students **PAGE 8**



SAWYER M.B. ERCH



# Teachers react to new Promethean smart boards in classrooms

BY ZOE DILWORTH  
staff writer

As big Promethean smart boards continue to get wheeled into Berkeley High School classrooms, it seems as though the days of whiteboards and markers are coming to an end. The widespread rollout of the boards began around 2021.

Today, BHS hosts around 50 to 70 Promethean smart boards, and the plan is for this number to increase. While the boards have primarily been installed based on teacher applications and the needs for teaching specific subjects, there are cases where the technology was not requested.

“As a teacher, my environment is really important for

myself and my students, and so I like to make it really accessible for everybody. For me, having a Promethean screen that takes a space in an art studio was not what I wanted,” said Candiss Youngblood, the AP/IB Studio Art teacher. “I never signed up to have one in my classroom, and when my projector started going out, I was just told that I was gonna

get a Promethean board, and I was against that ... I ended up having to barter with another teacher to get their projector placed into my classroom ... I feel like teachers should be allowed to choose the technology that best suits themselves and their students’ needs.”

Angela Coppola, the AC History and World of Media teacher noted the visual benefits of smart boards. “It makes some things easier and other things harder. In World of Media, students can come up and find parts of a video they need to reference,” Coppola said. At the same time, the board has posed some drawbacks. “Not every student can see the entire board. I made a request and the board was lifted up two inches, which was the best they could do,” Coppola said.

The rollout of these Promethean smart boards has not been exclusive to BHS classes and has occurred across the entire district. A large portion of this funding comes from bonds that are voted for in local elections.

Matt Albinson, a BHS computer science teacher who was

key in the implementation of the boards, noted their benefits. “Everyday students really can walk into a classroom and all of a sudden your teacher has this new tool that can help you kind of visualize things,” said Albinson.

However, whether Promethean Boards truly improve learning is a subject of debate. “I feel like normally a whiteboard does just fine and also doesn’t have as much glare,” Sadie Byrnes, a BHS junior, said, “Often I notice a decent glare which is kind of annoying if you’re in the wrong part of the room ... The only case where I feel like it is quite useful is when the teacher is like, showing students work.”

BHS junior Lily Collins holds similar sentiments. Collins thinks Prometheans are not a detriment to the classroom, but it is unclear if they add anything new.

“I feel like it kind of depends on the subject, like if it’s something that it is needed to annotate on or show multiple different slides or something, it is helpful, but in general, I think projectors work just as

well,” Collins said.

Ultimately, the utility of the Prometheans seems to depend on the subjects being taught. Richard Conn, who teaches AP Art History has found that the boards integrate well into a class where visuals and physical analysis are so essential.

“I have a larger projection screen, but when I use it, it blocks all my white board space. I have found that I love annotating images in art history. Jumping from presentation to whiteboard (mode) is really easy, so sometimes I use that instead of my actual whiteboard,” Conn said.

Albinson has been working to incorporate the technology in a way that benefits students’ learning.

“We know from the research that screens (do not) equal learning,” Albinson said, “I’m certainly not under the illusion that just by adding this technology to the classroom, students are learning more, it’s really about how the teacher uses it, and that’s why that’s part of my job is to work with teachers to help them use it effective ways.”



JAY TRAUNER

## NEWS BRIEF: BUSD confirms no schools will be closed amidst budget cuts

BY HAZEL LUTZKER  
staff writer

Recently, Berkeley Unified School District, among various other school districts across the Bay Area, have faced budget cuts. These budget cuts necessitate the redistribution of funds and identifying where funding can be reduced. Faced with these funding reductions, some Bay Area districts have resorted to shutting down their districts’ prized possession: schools.

BUSD’s recent budget cuts may have introduced a concern among community members that BUSD, like surrounding school districts, may have to shut down a school campus.

Trish Mcdermott, the BUSD Senior Communications Officer oversees all

aspects of district communication, including media relations, press releases, social media, and community engagement, wrote to the Jacket that BUSD does not intend on shutting down any of its schools due to budget cuts.

“It’s important to understand that while some districts in California are experiencing declining enrollment, Berkeley Unified is not, and we are not projecting this,” Mcdermott wrote, “Like many California school districts, BUSD had to cut our budget for the current school year and budget planning for the 2025-2026 school year has begun. There are no plans at this time to close schools as a budget-balancing measure.”

According to Mcdermott, districts often face difficult decisions and may

be forced to close a school if state funding does not keep up with rising costs.

Mcdermott also expanded on how BUSD’s process for creating its budget. “District staff, after months of work and engagement, multiple updates at Board meetings, and after the Governor’s May budget revision is released, bring the budget for the following school year to our Board of Education in June for approval,” said Mcdermott

The financial challenges that the Bay Area’s public schools are facing are undeniable. However, parents, students, and community members can find relief in knowing that BUSD is not considering school closures. Nevertheless, the examples of nearby districts serve as a reminder that these financial struggles also persist in our district.

THE JACKET  
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**BLACK  
HISTORY  
MONTH**  
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*The Jacket* is looking for art, writing, photography, or other submissions from students for Black History Month!

Submissions are due **January 31st**. Please email [josephinemorasky@students.berkeley.net](mailto:josephinemorasky@students.berkeley.net) or [ysabelchu@students.berkeley.net](mailto:ysabelchu@students.berkeley.net) with questions or submissions!

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# Trump officially inaugurated as president; Berkeley High reacts and braces for impact

BY AMARA KAPUR  
staff writer

The United States has officially entered the second Trump term. On Monday, Jan. 20, 2025, Donald Trump was sworn in as the 47th president of the United States. Berkeley citizens and students are grappling with what this means for our community, and how to prepare for the impact of the next four years.

In Trump's 2025 inauguration speech, he painted a grim picture of the current state of the United States, saying things such as, "While the pillars of our society lay broken and seemingly in complete disrepair," and "America's decline is over." During the 29 minutes he spoke, Donald Trump claimed American citizens have been misled and lied to under the previous administration, and he is the individual who can bring America to its "golden age." Trump also spoke about the assassination attempt in Butler, Pennsylvania, saying he was "saved by God to make America great again."

Trump made many promises during his speech which included declaring a national emergency at the southern border, saying, "All illegal entry will immediately be halted." Trump also promised to pardon those criminally involved with the Jan. 6 insurrection, federally recognize only two genders, and have federal agencies rename parts of the Gulf of Mexico to the "Gulf of America," all of which he has done in his first few days in office.

Trump's agenda has raised concerns across the country — including in Berkeley.

"Although we wish Kamala Harris would have won, this election was still a demonstration of democracy working," Rachel Roberts, a senior at Berkeley High School and the co-president of the Students for Reproductive Choice club, said. Before 2022, access to abortion was guaranteed under Roe v. Wade but this was overturned by the Supreme Court due to the conservative majority appointed under Trump's first presidency. "We think with our new president, reproductive freedom will be considerably restricted and under constant threat to be abolished completely,"

Rob -

erts said. She added that it is fortunate that the state we live in has ensured abortion protection for all who are seeking it.

Roberts said her club wrote postcards to Arizona voters prior to the November 2024 election, urging them to vote "Yes" on Prop. 139. Since then, Prop. 139 has been passed, meaning abortion rights are guaranteed in Arizona. Right now, the club is continuing to spread awareness about abortion access through education.

"People are really concerned about what kind of executive action (Trump) is making, and going to make still," said Joseph Smith, a BHS teacher of U.S. History and AP Macroeconomics. He said that the district and local politicians are already trying to educate people

works. "I still remember Trump's first speech talking about American carnage," Smith said, referencing Trump's 2016 inauguration speech that focused on the idea that the American people were being deprived and deceived by the previous administration.

Climate is another subject Trump acted upon almost immediately after being sworn in as president. On Trump's first day in office, he signed an executive order pulling out of the Paris Climate Agreement, and declared a national energy emergency. The Paris Climate Agreement is an international treaty on climate change. The United States' departure joins only three other countries not part of the agreement: Libya, Iran, and Yemen.

"I believe that Trump's decision to pull out of the Paris Climate Agreement is incredibly detrimental to the future of our planet and is all around embarrassing for our country, which is now refusing to take action for the climate crisis that they contributed to," Eva Dickinson, a sophomore at BHS, said. This is the second time Trump has pulled out of the Paris Climate Agreement. Trump withdrew back in June of 2017, however, Joe Biden rejoined during his presidency.

Donald Trump's second term as president brings uncertainty and concern among those who live in the Bay Area, but Smith encouraged people to not lose hope.

"We just have to fight it as best we can while still working within the system because we want the system to work for us too," Smith said.



their rights, because citizens want to know if and how their lives will change. "On some level, people want to be prepared," Smith said.

"I think the biggest part of an inauguration is like: you know what? What's the president gonna say? What are their first words as president?" Smith said. The upcoming president's first words often make a strong impression on citizens. According to Nielsen Holdings, a media audience measurement firm, 24.6 million Americans watched Trump's inauguration through major net-



## STUDY RESOURCES ON AND AROUND CAMPUS

KAILEY ROBINSON



Having a focused place to do schoolwork is a significant factor in producing high-quality work. For me, I know that I do not concentrate well at home. There are too many distractions, preventing me from being focused. I often turn to the Berkeley Public Library up the block from Berkeley High School. The Public Library requires no library card to enter and has a large teen room for students to study. Plus a quiet work section for people who need a silent place to lock in. After talking to Amiyah Love, a BHS freshman, I learned I am not alone in loving the Public Library. She loves the Public Library for its events and care, stating, "They do stuff they don't have to do." An example of this is "they have events going on surrounding the high school students, like having special events when we're having (finals)," Love said.

Another resource is teachers' office hours which are great to attend if you are struggling in a specific subject. Going to office hours can often be the wisest choice because your teachers will have more knowledge on the work you are doing in class.

We also have the library at school which is open after school until 4:30 p.m. William Bisanki, BHS freshman who utilizes the library daily, shared that "Sometimes if you don't finish all your work, I feel like it's good to come to the library, so (you can) catch up on work." He also explained that a bonus about working in the library is that "They have books from like authors, from like all kinds of different backgrounds."

Right across from the library is College and Career Center (CCC), which has college tutors for every subject. The CCC is open from 3:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. on Mondays through Thursdays. Lots of students go to the CCC every day. I talked to Abiy Afework, a BHS freshman who says that if he had to pick any place on or around campus to complete work he would choose the CCC. Afework, explaining why he likes it there, said, "My favorite part of working in the CCC is you can talk with the tutors, like, not only will they give you help, but like, if you wanna talk with them about school, (or) anything, they're very friendly, genuine people, and they're really nice." Having kind tutors around is a great way to get help when teachers aren't available.

Fortunately there are many convenient places to study, get tutoring, and more around BHS. However, I know that those aren't always accessible for everyone. So a few here are methods to make your home a distraction-free place. To start, moving your phone away from you, such as by placing it in a different room, will decrease the temptation to be on it because it isn't in your view. This is the out-of-sight, out-of-mind technique. Cleaning up around your workspace can make completing work less stress-inducing and allow you to better focus on what you are doing. Finally listening to music, or using headphones to cancel out noise is great because, it blocks out the distractions around you, letting you concentrate on what is in front of you.



# BUSD curriculum sessions open the conversation to families

BY CID FRYDMAN  
staff writer

Since Wednesday, Feb. 28, 2024, the Berkeley Unified School District has been hosting Listening and Learning sessions, a platform for community members to engage with district leaders over the recent changes and adoption of the literacy curriculum in elementary schools. There have been four sessions over the course of the last year, the most recent being on Monday, Jan. 13, 2025, at Berkeley Arts Magnet Elementary School. These meetings have provided parents with an opportunity to learn about the adoption of the elementary school curriculum, voice their concerns, ask questions, and share their feedback directly to the district.

Director of Curriculum and Instruction, Chris Albeck said that he considers these sessions as, “An opportunity for BUSD community to hear about our elementary curriculum adoption process, but also to provide feedback and guidance to ideas that we have, procedures that will follow and our next steps

as it relates to the adoption process.”

The Listening and Learning sessions were originally designed and created to unite and give the district more opportunities to connect and interact with the Berkeley community over the curriculum that is being implemented into BUSD elementary schools.

“We are in an adoption process, and it’s really important for us to get input, so our parents, our community members and our educators feel like they have a voice in our decision making process, and so we wanted a space where everyone can come together and learn from each other,” Literacy Coach Erica Carter said.

*“I personally got to sit with lots of the different families and hear what they were thinking ... that’s the data that we want to take.”*

Erica Carter  
BUSD Literacy Coach

For BUSD parents like Jaclyn Lee, attending these sessions is about ensuring that the new curriculum will support and ensure that students will have the right materials to use literacy skills efficiently. Lee shared a per-

sonal story about her reason for attending. “I have a fifth grader who I just actually got the email from his tutor yesterday that he reads, writes, and spells at a second and third grade level,” Lee said, “It’s sort of been going on for a couple of years that we’ve been really noticing, trying to advocate for him, to get the support through the school. I did a little bit of research, learning that the curriculum maybe was part of the reason why. So I just wanted to come and learn about the curriculum and help my kid get the help he needs.”

The fourth session focused on one particular theme: a window into a BHS classroom. Albeck said, “With this particular session, we sort of wanted to give this metaphorical window into what’s happening in BUSD classrooms now and then what will be happening into in BUSD classrooms next year, and to sort of share a little bit about why that shift will happen and why it’s an improvement.”

This meeting highlighted the adoption process of transitioning from the Fast Track Phonics program and Heggerty Literacy program,



The fourth Listening and Learning session, held at Berkeley Arts Magnet Elementary. ALEX TRIPCEVICH

into Fish Tank, another literacy program. According to information sourced from the BUSD website and curriculum page, this transition, set to start up next school year, aims to help equip BUSD students with essential literacy and communication skills. Fish Tank learning, according to its website, builds focus and overall knowledge, increases reading and writing connection, and provides a more diverse and culturally representative literature program. Lee commented on the new curriculum saying, “I like the intention to the details of how children are being educated, and learning, and some of the things that are priorities, like you know, equality and diversity and really making sure that

they’re deeply learning this knowledge.” These two hour sessions not only go over new changes to the elementary curriculum, but also allow parents and community members to engage with one another and voice their opinions with the district facilitators as well. Carter believes that the most recent session met its goals of increasing open communication. “I think we learned more about simply how to tell families and community members what these curriculums are. There was space for questions and answers. I know, I personally got to sit with lots of the different families and hear what they were thinking. And that is, that’s the data that we want to take. And then we go back to the

district, and we talk about all the feedback and how to implement that into our plan which is always super helpful for us,” said Carter. For some BUSD parents, the significance of the Listening and Learning sessions are something that cannot be overstated. Parent Katy Reese said, “I think it’s important for there to be a venue for families to engage with the curriculum change process. It’s a big deal to adopt a new curriculum for English language arts. It makes up a huge portion of what our students do every day, and it really impacts their experience of school. So families should have the opportunity to know about what’s going on and ask questions. So it’s great that we have these sessions.”

# Freshmen leaders bring fresh perspectives to BHS leadership

BY KAITLYN FISCHL  
staff writer

Traditionally, leadership has been left to upperclassmen, but Berkeley High School offers freshmen the opportunity to step in and fill their own leadership roles. Many freshmen decide to join leadership because of a desire to make a meaningful impact in their new school environment. With the recent release of Associated Student Body applications on Monday,

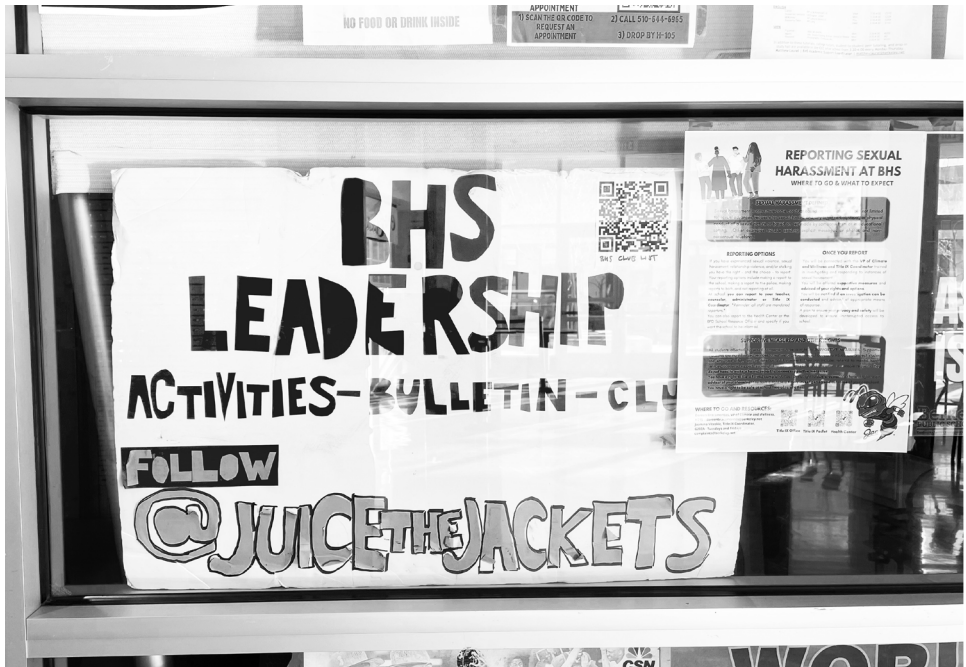
Jan. 6, 2025, freshmen are offered a chance to continue their leadership journey after a first semester in high school leadership. Numerous freshmen have their sights set on leaving an impact and contributing to change at BHS. “Our school needs to have more group events between the grades. I feel like we’re very separated. There’s very much a very strong seniority construct,” said Laurel McGatlin-Golier, a freshman in leadership, “I feel like a lot of people

would really benefit from getting to know those who are older than them.” McGatlin-Golier aims to help bridge the gap within grade levels at BHS. According to McGatlin-Golier, this is one of the many objectives the freshman leadership team plans to address. Even with ambitious goals, achieving them can often prove to be more difficult than anticipated. As freshmen, the ninth grade leadership team is not always taken seriously, according to Dahlia Merlin,

a BHS freshman in leadership. “Since we’re younger than everyone, I feel like we are respected less, but that just makes us want to prove them wrong and to make more change for the people at our school,” Merlin said. As values evolve with each grade and class, freshmen introduce fresh perspectives and insights on how to foster a more inclusive and improved school environment. Freshmen bring innovative ideas and hope to enhance and build a safe atmosphere for all students, according to Merlin. “It’s easier for freshmen to see what really needs to be done instead of someone who’s been here for years and has just been used to everything,” Merlin said. Freshman leadership’s willingness to question current systems and rules as well as advocate for change can be a powerful tool in building a sense of community at BHS. Their efforts ensure that school culture remains open and inclusive according to Merlin. Already, freshmen have brought some of their concepts to a reality. The freshman leadership team set up a hot chocolate bar on the last week before winter break.

“During finals week, we set up a place where all freshmen could come, no matter who they were, to study, enjoy time with their friends, de-stress, and overall have a great last week of school experience,” McGatlin-Golier said. Making this space available fostered a sense of belonging among the freshman students and created an environment where students were able to rejuvenate after finals in a safe atmosphere, according to Merlin. “We felt like it was a really safe space to study, just think about your finals, have fun with your friends, and de-stress from whatever you had had in the day,” Merlin said. The freshman leadership team also implemented a candy gram fund raiser for future projects. Through selling the candy grams the leadership team was able to raise a large sum of money. “We made more money from candy grams than they did last year,” BHS freshman, Sarah Khan-Akselrod said, “We raised a decent amount of money where we had money left over for

ninth grade.” Leadership roles offer freshmen an opportunity for personal growth and development. Being on the leadership team builds students’ problem solving and collaboration skills according to Khan-Akselrod. It also provides students with a sense of responsibility and engagement within BHS. “I’ve gained the skill of adaptability. Learning to work with 12 people in a student council for your grade, instead of just one or two, really made it so you had to hear each person’s point of view. You had to listen to many different inputs, and try to make a situation that benefits everybody,” McGatlin-Golier said, as she reflected on the previous semester in leadership. Khan-Akselrod encourages all freshmen to apply for leadership, viewing it as an invaluable opportunity. “If you do want to do leadership, don’t be hesitant about it, because it’s not like a scary experience,” Khan-Akselrod said, “It’s just like something you’ll get better at with practice and the more you do different leadership positions, the better you’ll become at being a leader.”



Poster in the D building advertising the BHS leadership team. DANIELA SIERRA ROMERO



BERKELEY HIGH JACKET

# OPINION

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## More socialization is vital to youth health

BY CECILIA TILES  
staff writer

Between 2003 and 2022, in-person socializing between teenagers dropped by an astounding 45 percent. In the last few years, teenagers have become more isolated and antisocial than ever before. As a lasting effect of that isolation, teenagers spend increasingly more time on their devices, secluding themselves from others. Today's youth prefer to make connections through a screen, rather than make friends in person. Unfortunately, this decrease in socialization has lasting effects on students' well-being. Teenagers are in desperate need of more social interactions, face-to-

face contact, and less screen time — hopefully allowing for improvements in mental health and happiness.

Despite what younger generations might think, socializing is an essential part of a healthy lifestyle and cannot be replaced by perceived online interaction, as increased seclusion has been directly linked to negative mental health. In polls conducted by the Kaiser Family Foundation in 2021, 42 percent of youth said that they had regular feelings of sorrow and discouragement, a significant 14 percent increase from 2011. Social interaction fosters a sense of belonging and meaning within teenagers and is needed to maintain a good mental state.

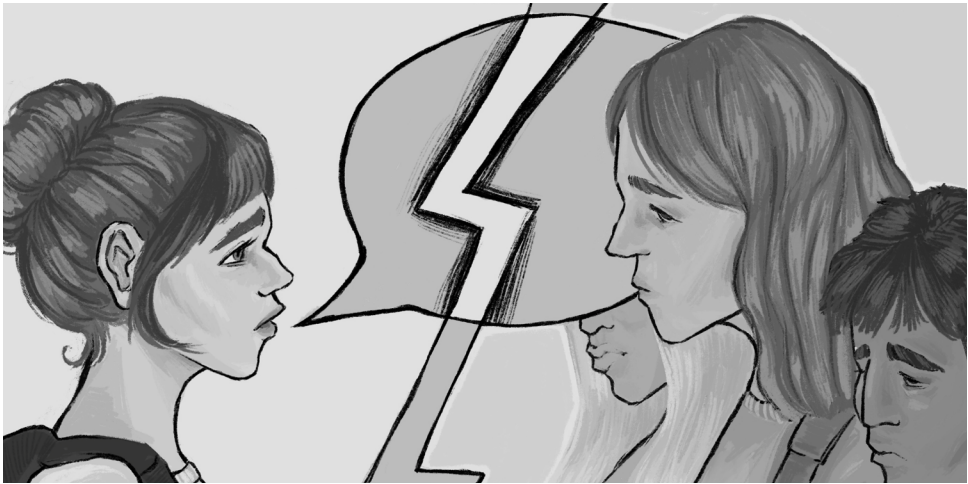
Just like eating, exercis-

ing, and listening to music, having positive social interactions releases endorphins in the brain in the form of dopamine, which is often referred to as a "natural painkiller." Endorphins help block pain receptors and allow for a greater sense of physical and mental happiness. Endorphins also lower stress, and help minimize any negative thoughts and moods. Social interaction is so important that it changes the way your brain works.

The importance of a good social life is also relevant educationally. While it may sound counterintuitive, having more meaningful friendships is linked to academic success. Students with no friends "receive lower grades and are less academically engaged com-

pared to those with even just one friend," reported Jaana Juvonen, a psychology professor at the University of California, Los Angeles, in a 2019 issue of the Educational Psychologist. Friendships and socialization increase engagement in class and promote healthy behaviors and interactions, resulting in better grades and higher levels of success. Research has shown that those who have fewer friends or struggle to be sociable tend to be less successful academically. They might feel more isolated and alone — resulting in decreased motivation.

Now more than ever, teenagers need to make lifestyle changes to extricate themselves from the vicious cycle of technology addiction, declining social skills, and the negative mental health ramifications that come with it. From making eye contact with somebody across the classroom to saying yes to social invitations, or joining new activities and clubs. Who knows who might be there — maybe even somebody in a similar situation. In the end, they don't need to throw elaborate parties or be social butterflies, but they must make connections with others; their well-being may depend on it.



EDEN MIDDLESWART

## Ditch the scroll: Productive phone usage

BY KARIM MELEIS  
staff writer

Are smartphones wreaking havoc on teens' lives? Lately, some have argued that smartphones are harming teens' mental and physical health. While such claims are largely true, there are many productive ways to use your cell phone. Here are a few you should consider:

**Online Puzzles:** Online puzzles benefit your mind because they can stimulate various cognitive skills. For example, puzzles that involve numbers like Sudoku and KenKen activate areas of the brain associated with logical thinking. Language puzzles like Wordle, Connections, and Wordscapes can stimulate brain regions involved in language processing. Puzzles can train a wide range of brain functions, so they are

a good tool if you want to improve your mental skills in a lot of different areas.

**Language Learning:** Speaking of language, if you want to learn a new one, your phone can help you do so. Language learning apps like Duolingo gamify the process of learning a new language, helping you stay motivated. While they are not sufficient to achieve fluency in a language, they offer a far more productive use of time than social media. In addition, if used in conjunction with language classes at Berkeley High School, they can be a valuable tool on the road to fluency.

**Podcasts:** Listening to podcasts in a language you are trying to learn is a great way to build

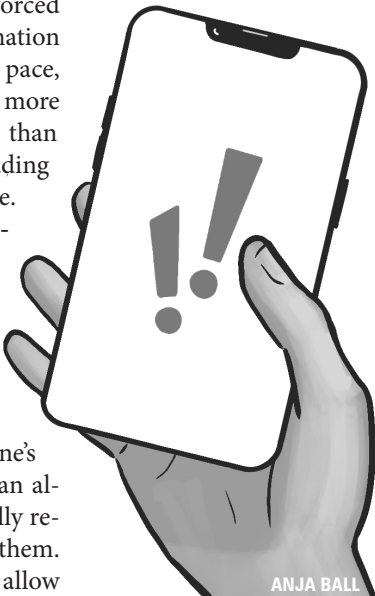
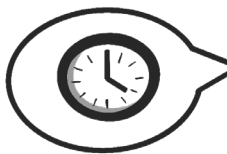
your knowledge. Additionally, podcasts like "My Favorite Murder" and "Stuff You Should Know" are also excellent ways to use your phone. According to The At-

lantic, students who listened to a podcast while simultaneously reading its transcript were more focused and understood the content better. This may be because, when listening to something, your brain is forced to process information at the speaker's pace, keeping you more engaged than when reading words on a page.

**Time Management:** Your phone can also help you stay focused more generally by helping you organize your time. You can put your commitments in your phone's calendar app, which can allow you to automatically receive reminders about them. Note-taking apps can allow

you to jot down both important facts and ideas for things like school projects that you might otherwise forget. Finally, using your phone to create a to-do list is an excellent way to make sure that you don't forget any of your tasks.

The negative reputation of smartphones is only part of the story. There are a plethora of productive ways to use them — one just needs to remember how.



ANJA BALL

## THE SELF-CARE CHRONICLES

HANNAH SUMNER



Hey Jackets, happy Friday! Welcome back to the Self Care Chronicles. With finals having just passed, I thought that it would be nice to talk about the mental aspect of self care so we can be better prepared for spring evaluations.

According to the Australian government, "Self-talk is the way you talk to yourself, or your inner voice ... Self-talk is important because it has a big impact on how you feel, what you do and even how you manage pain." Self-talk can be positive and empowering, but can also be negative and diminishing. Having positive self-talk helps to re-frame challenges as learning opportunities, boost resilience, focus, and determination. One way to start better self-talk is to rephrase your negative thoughts into positive ones. Instead of saying, "I am bad at the clarinet," try saying, "I am getting better at the clarinet."

Mindfulness is being aware of yourself, your feelings, and thoughts in your current state without judgement. Basically, it helps you become more present and intentional in daily life. While it seems daunting, in actuality it can be simple, the trick is to do it often. You don't need an hour a day or fancy equipment, all you need is yourself and a couple of minutes. You can practice mindfulness on the bus, during lunch, before and/or after school, or any time when you have a few minutes to spare. You can practice mindfulness by focusing on your breath, or doing the 54321 sensory grounding (five things you can see, four things you can touch, three sounds, two smells, one taste).

Another form of mental self care is therapy. Therapy is a treatment that is aimed at relieving emotional stress and other mental health problems. Therapy creates a safe space to talk about whatever might be on your mind and help you to build coping skills. You do not need to pay a therapist in order to have therapy (though it is a great option if you want and you have the time and money for it), you can practice therapy with your friends, a trusted adult, or even by yourself. To some, it could be venting about your feelings, or for others it could be discussing their past. An amazing therapy resource is the Wellness Center, located in H104. You can stop in there any time between 8:30 a.m. (10 a.m. on Mondays) and four p.m., with a lunch break in the middle. The Wellness Center offers a quiet place for students to be if they are having a tough time or need a break from class. Inside the Wellness Center, there are an array of different activities for students to do in order to calm down, like puzzles, coloring books, and board games. There are also adults that you can talk to who will keep all information confidential unless it crosses the mandated reporter line. On top of that, you don't have to pay to go to the Wellness Center! Just dock your phone and enjoy the things that it has to offer.

With that Jackets, remember to be kind to yourself. You got this!



# Tweeting the truth: Should social media companies have the right to censor content?

## PRO

BY YOSHI ROHN  
staff writer

In a world increasingly being defined by our online interactions, social media has become a very powerful tool for connection, self-expression, and education. However, this influence isn't always beneficial, especially when it goes unchecked. From fake news to harmful content, social media platforms need to increase their censorship. Censorship isn't about silencing opinions, it's about protecting people and ensuring social media is safe for everyone. Because of this, censorship is good and necessary to create a healthier, more trustworthy digital environment where users, especially the most vulnerable, can engage without fear of being negatively impacted.

One of the biggest dangers of social media is the spread of misinformation. Fake news, whether about politics, health, or world events, can easily mislead millions of people. In 2022, a study by the Pew Research Center found that nearly 50 percent of U.S. adults got their news from social media, but much of it was inaccurate or misleading. For example, during elections, false claims about voter fraud or misleading information about candidates can confuse voters and influence their decisions. For example, during the 2020 U.S. presidential election, false claims about widespread voter fraud, such as the debunked assumption that thousands of votes were cast by deceased individuals, circulated widely on social media, confusing voters and causing distrust in the voting process. Similarly, during the COVID-19 pandemic, misinformation about vaccines spread rapidly causing many people to distrust lifesaving medical advice. Social media platforms have the ability and the responsibility to remove this type of content before it causes any real-world harm.

The problem doesn't stop at misinformation. Social media is also filled with harmful content, especially for minors. Many young people are exposed to dangerous content, such as posts glorifying eating disorders, self-harm, or violent challenges. TikTok challenges like the Blackout challenge, Benadryl challenge, and many others have had real-life effects. For example, a 10-year-old girl in Italy died while attempting the Blackout Challenge, a dangerous trend on TikTok that encourages participants to choke themselves until they lose consciousness. According to Italian authorities, the girl had tied a belt around her neck in an attempt to complete the challenge but accidentally killed herself.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, rates of depression and anxiety among teens have risen sharply in recent years, with social media playing a major role

in this increase. The CDC's Youth Risk Behavior Survey Data Summary & Trends Report shows that in 2023, 40 percent of high school students reported experiencing persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness while 20 percent seriously considered committing suicide. By censoring harmful content, posts promoting self-harm, cyberbullying, or unrealistic beauty standards, platforms can limit the negative influences that worsen mental health.

Social media companies also often profit more from harmful content, making censorship essential to keep big companies in check. Controversial posts tend to generate higher engagement — more likes, comments, and shares — which directly boosts platforms' revenue. For instance, Facebook's internal research in 2021 revealed that divisive content was more likely to be shared because of its ability to spark angry reactions. While a controversial opinion itself isn't inherently harmful, algorithms amplify extreme or misleading takes that enter dangerous territory, such as hate speech or misinformation.

Some argue that censorship violates free speech, and while that's an important concern, it's equally critical to recognize that even freedom of speech has its limits. Social media companies aren't banning opinions, they're targeting lies, hate speech, and harmful material that can hurt real people and communities. By harnessing censorship as a tool and not a weapon, social media can become a safe space for all.

## CON

BY ELI LEICHTER WILSON  
staff writer

In the modern age, social media is the primary platform for social discourse. The effect of social media increasingly bleeds into politics and real-life culture. However, with such power in our lives, these platforms' ability to regulate speech is a growing source of concern. Moderation — deciding what content is acceptable and what is not — has the potential to threaten free expression in an increasingly alarming way, since it limits free speech, cannot be done fairly, and places too much power in the hands of companies.

unevenly applying censorship. Beyond swaying opinions, this creates an environment that increases tensions by stopping conversation on important issues.

Sometimes, the power doesn't even rest with a group but an individual. Elon Musk, the owner of the social media app X, has wielded his censorship powers to target accounts on both sides of the aisle over the past year. He has used tactics such as the removal of verification badges, revoking of monetization privileges, and reducing the visibility of posts he disagrees with. In the months leading up to the election, left-wing accounts were targeted, and in recent weeks, the accounts of right-wing figures who criticized Musk for his views on immigration faced similar consequences. Media executives like Musk use censorship in entirely arbitrary ways. Their rules are subject to change on a whim. These tools are constantly used in ways that benefit single persons or corporations, not the general public. When a single set of beliefs is all that makes it through the filter of moderation, social media sites that should be open to all beliefs become echo chambers.

Even when moderation is left to algorithms, the outcomes are far from impartial or effective. Automated systems are frequently praised as alternatives to inherently biased human judgment, but they come with their own issues. Users of platforms like TikTok and Instagram frequently report senseless take-downs of innocent posts or the banning of users for no valid reason. Machines cannot understand nuance or context, making them just as or even more unreliable than human moderators.

At the heart of the issue is a fundamental principle: free speech is essential to any democracy. The First Amendment of the American Constitution enshrines this right as something essential to liberty. Historically, every authoritarian regime began with censoring of information and erasing this essential freedom. The moment we limit speech, we take a step in the direction of autocracy.

The solution to these issues lies in government regulations on social media moderation. Companies must be held to strict legal standards of what content can and cannot be regulated, and do so with absolute transparency. If this does not happen, social media will continue to make us increasingly close-minded and hostile to conflicting ideas, as it already has begun to. By taking control out of the hands of tech giants like Meta, X, and TikTok, the U.S. can truly become a society that values freedom, one in which that freedom applies to everyone and everything, not just to those a person agrees with. In practice, this means tolerating controversial or uncomfortable speech in the name of open dialogue. Although may be tough, it will be worth it in order to maintain our right to freedom of speech as a whole. Without this commitment, social media companies risk undermining democratic values and leading the world in the wrong direction.



The most obvious issue with censoring offensive or unsavory speech is that “offensive speech” is entirely subjective. What is completely reasonable to one person may be appalling to another. Additionally, the mechanical, impersonal internet is a filter through which tone, sarcasm, and intent are easily lost, resulting in constant misinterpretations. America's highly polarized culture makes the effect worse. In short, “fair” moderation does not exist.

The decision of what to censor usually lies in the hands of small groups within private companies. These groups, which are rarely held accountable for their choices, are able to impose their prejudices on a worldwide audience. In the context of the ongoing conflict in Israel, several prominent companies, including tech giant Meta, have been accused of



EDITORIAL

# BUSD must protect its undocumented community members

When President Donald Trump ran for office in 2016, he led a campaign filled with promises to crack down on illegal immigration through increased border patrol and deportation. This resulted in many immigrants in the U.S. fearing for their safety, especially those without permanent residence visas. Just one month after President Trump’s election, Berkeley Unified School District issued a statement explaining how they would respond to attempted immigration enforcement against students or BUSD families.

Board policy 5111.5, titled “Protection of Undocumented Students”, was originally adopted in 2016. Now, eight years after Board Policy 5111.5 (Protection of Undocumented Students) was adopted, President Trump

has been re-elected and members of the BUSD community are increasingly concerned about what it could mean for those without legal documentation of citizenship in the U.S. With looming threats of mass deportation and eliminating birth-right citizenship, protection of undocumented students is integral for the safety and well-being of our community.

In a recent address to the Berkeley Public Schools community, Superintendent Enikia Ford Morthel reaffirmed BUSD’s plan for interaction with immigration control during President Trump’s second term. The policy lists the many ways BUSD will attempt to protect students’ legal information and documentation status from any federal officers. The address reassured community members that no students or families without citizenship will have their status exposed to Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents and provided a few quick tips to help families prepare in the event of an emergency. These included knowing emergency phone numbers and where to find important documentation (passports, social security cards, birth certificates, etc.) The district will also deny any immigration enforcement officers the privilege onto school premises to interview a student or access school documents. This policy will hopefully help protect undocumented students and BUSD schools from deportation or questioning by ICE.

Still, with President Trump’s inauguration on Monday, Jan. 20, 2025, the fear of displacement leaves the future for many undocumented students and their families uncertain. All students, regardless of their family’s immigration status, should

continue to advocate for protection of those at risk for deportation. President Trump has made it clear that he plans to initiate harsh protocols against undocumented immigrants in the U.S. and while we, as students, do not have the resources to combat this issue alone, we are still able to speak up for the humanitarian rights of everyone in our Berkeley community. It may feel like we are in a hopeless position — constantly worrying about families’ loved ones begin deported — however, we can make change. Individuals hoping to become involved in supporting undocumented community members can donate to or volunteer at local organizations like the Alameda County Social Services Agency (SSA). The Alameda County SSA is currently fighting for the security and wellbeing of all immigrants and refugees in the East Bay and works to provide “financial, food, and health-care assistance, employment and training, and other culturally sensitive supportive services and referrals.”

There are many other resources available for immigrant and undocumented families in our community. Since the possibility of being questioned by ICE about citizenship status is becoming increasingly plausible for undocumented families, BUSD’s “Resources for Immigrant Families” webpage has valuable information. One resource listed is a Family Preparedness Plan, including advice for what to do if an immigrant family encounters ICE. The key points are to make a childcare plan, find out about your immigration options, and know your rights. You can find more information at <https://www.berkeleyschools.net/resources-for-immigrant-families/>.

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We encourage students, staff, and the community to submit letters to the Editor for publication. All submissions must be signed; anonymous letters may only be printed with a two-thirds vote of the Editorial Board.

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

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## SCIENCE SPOTLIGHT

# Smart glasses dazzle consumers but pose risks to society

BY NOA OSLER  
staff writer

It’s a Monday morning, so you roll out of bed, quickly put on your glasses, and instantaneously are immersed in a different world. As you inch into your slippers, a picture gets taken of your bare feet. As you make your coffee, a video records the beans grinding. When you step outside and ask a question about the weather, a voice in your head answers. This is the future of technology, except it is happening right now.

With Meta’s new Ray-Ban glasses, users have access to a live camera, microphones, ear speakers, and even a virtual assistant. While some people may explode at the promise of innovative technology, in reality, these glasses are unnecessary and can even be dangerous.

In 2024, the average worldwide screen time per day was six hours and 40 minutes, and in the United States, it was a staggering seven hours and three minutes. This is around half of

the time that humans spend awake each day. Given this, increasing one’s screen time would be a concerning decision, as it would take away from the pleasures of living in the moment.

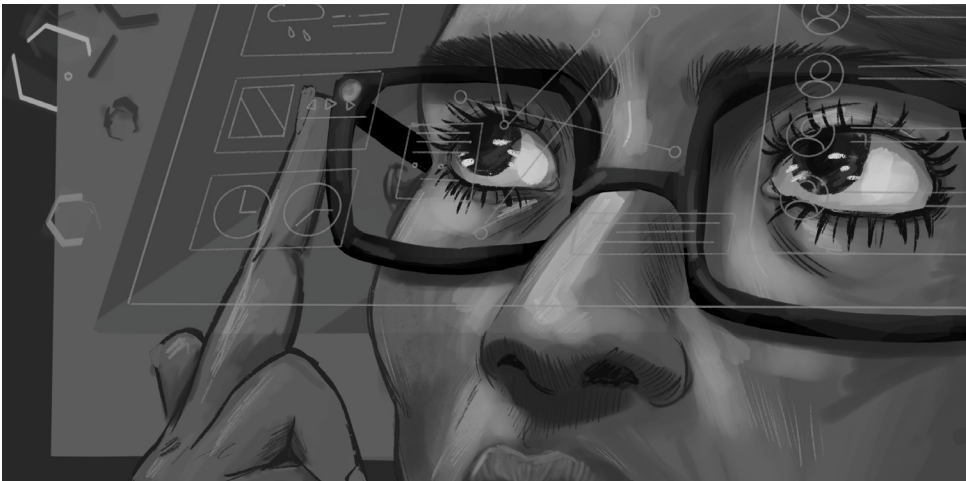
While the glasses are nonessential, it is hard to deny that they are pretty cool. The innovative features allow users to easily disconnect from external matters, and the technology itself can provide a nice break from a phone. If used in moderation, the glasses could prove to be a substitute, or a complement, to the everyday phone.

The glasses’ unique ability to translate real-time speech between English, Spanish, French, and Italian is something that makes them special. According to TechCrunch, “when a wearer is talking to someone speaking one of those languages, they’ll hear what the speaker says in English through the glasses’ open-ear speakers and get a transcript on their paired phone.”

However, there are hidden dangers in the glasses as well. Unfortunately for

Meta, the Ray-Bans have quickly unleashed some turmoil into the world. In New Orleans, Louisiana, a man named Shamsud-Din Jabbar devastatingly killed 14 people in a terrorist attack in the early morning hours of New Year’s Day. Jabbar was reported to have been wearing the Meta Ray-Ban glasses during the incident, as well as weeks prior when he scoped out the path he would take to unleash havoc on the streets of New Orleans. FBI officials believe that Jabbar used the glasses’ camera and video functions to stealthily record the target neighborhood.

All in all, are these smart glasses a useful invention? Probably not. Nowadays with all the current accessible technology, the need for the Meta Ray-Ban glasses is not urgent whatsoever, and have so far done more bad than good for our society. As the glasses continue to update and change, there is a possibility that they could be more resourceful, but at this very moment, they have proven to be redundant and even dangerous.



SAWYER M.B. ERCH



# INVESTIGATIVE

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## Battling burnout: Upperclassmen struggle with 'senioritis'

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

also choose other classes with similar difficulties and workloads and sometimes over-schedule themselves with other activities.

### COLLEGE COMPETITION

The first semester of senior year is when many students start applying to colleges. The application process is known to be a stressful time for students; this has only gotten worse over the years. Shannon Mueller, a BHS biology teacher, and Nancy Hsieh, a Berkeley International High School and Hive five counselor, saw a definite increase in competitiveness surrounding colleges over time.

This may be due to the growing number of applications per year. In 2024, there were 904,860 first-year applicants as of Friday, Nov. 1, 2024 which showed a six percent year-over-year increase. These applicants submitted 4,017,250 total applications, a 10 percent increase compared to the same time in 2023.

"You can do everything right, and you can be an amazing applicant, but you still might not get into the school you want," Allison Toan, BHS senior said. She thinks that the culture around college admissions can make it feel as though students aren't doing enough, even if there isn't more that they can do. "It's kind of an awful feeling," Toan said.

### EXTREME WORKLOADS

However, even after most applications are over, the burnout doesn't necessarily end. According to Hsieh and Samuel Sutton, BHS senior, some seniors in their second semester find themselves lacking motivation for school once their after high school plans are solidified.

"After four years of high school, a lot of high school students are just ready to get out of here," Sutton said. He understands senior

burnout after college decisions and doesn't see it as a huge issue, but Sutton advised juniors who are feeling burnt out to "lock in."

Remy Williams, a BHS junior, explained she doesn't feel very impacted by burnout and she tries her best to minimize procrastination so that she isn't overwhelmed by her workload. Williams does notice the stress of junior year in many of her peers.

"Sometimes some of my (junior) teammates leave practice early to go do their homework, if they have a lot," she said. While Williams' academic workload doesn't seem to affect her very much, she mentioned how her extracurriculars sometimes make her school life harder. "I have to go to soccer practice every day of the week ... so I don't have a lot of time to work on my homework," she said.

BHS has many resources available for students struggling with academics, mental health, or anything else. Counselors at BHS, such as Hsieh, work with students to "come up with what are some stress reductions and different things that they can do (when feeling burnt out)," Hsieh said.

### IMPACT ON STUDENTS

Hsieh noticed that many of the students she counsels come into her office and describe being overwhelmed or burnt out, but will rarely use labels like "burnt out" or "overwhelmed." She explained that many students struggle with a lack of sleep and difficulty waking up, which is a more chronic issue than stress associated with cramming for tests and finals.

Another symptom of burnout Hsieh has noticed is attendance. "(Students) might still be coming, but they're still feeling like they don't want to be here. And then a lot of it too, we do see kids literally not coming to school," she said.



"I usually do most of my schoolwork and stuff in my room. So I like to get out of my room (when I feel overwhelmed),"  
- Allison Toan, BHS senior

Burnout manifests itself in different ways between juniors and seniors. Many seniors find themselves lacking motivation during their last days in high school, after the stress and build-up of college applications is over, and many juniors are feeling the effects of larger workloads.

### AVOIDING BURNOUT

To help combat burnout, Toan encouraged students to take breaks. "I usually do most of my schoolwork and stuff in my room. So

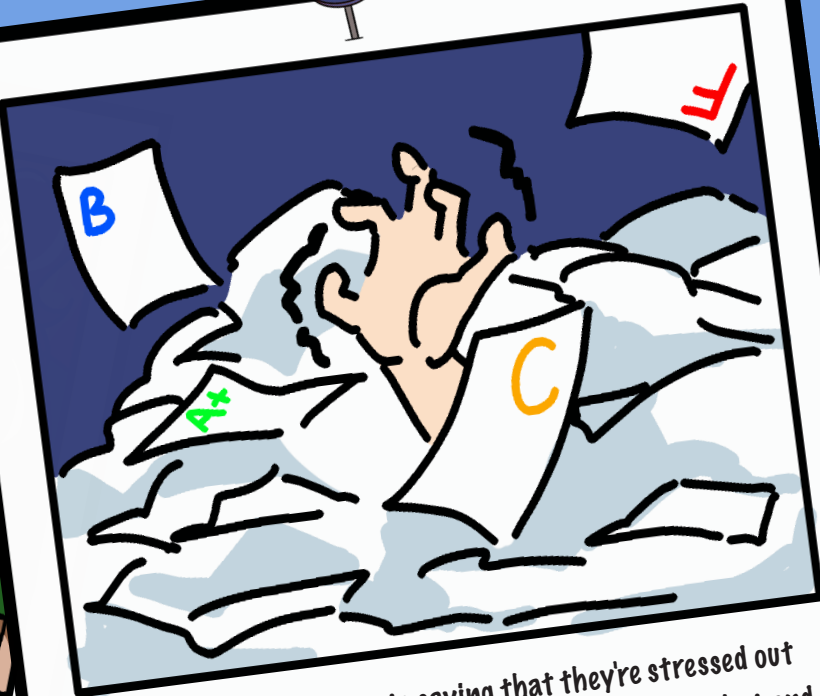
I like to get out of my room (when I feel overwhelmed)," she said. Sutton exercises or listens to music to relieve stress.

Mueller advised that students develop good organizational skills, as she believes that many students don't know how to manage their time very well which can commonly lead to burnout. She added that students should prioritize enjoying their time in high school and pursuing anything they're passionate about, rather than falling into the habit of decisions being based on what might appeal to colleges.

There's value in "naming what you're feeling or going through or experiencing," Hsieh said. She hopes the growing dialogue surrounding issues such as burnout will help students feel more willing to ask for support when needed. While conversations about students' mental health have become more normalized, it's important to continue educating and de-stigmatizing issues such as burnout so that students feel supported and comfortable in using the resources available to them.



"After four years of high school, a lot of high school students are just ready to get out of here"  
- Samuel Sutton, BHS senior



"I definitely hear students saying that they're stressed out because of their workload, and it's a combination of that and expectations from outside sources to get into a good college"  
- Shannon Mueller, AP, IB and standard Biology teacher



# FEATURES

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## Celebrating Lunar New Year at BHS

*From red envelopes to sparklers,  
the annual celebration unites  
and excites*

*Every year,  
Lunar New Year  
is celebrated by an  
estimated 2 billion  
people around the  
world.*

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Asia and the rest of the world. This has sparked many different traditions and values when it comes to Lunar New Year. "Within my own family ... (we) had a special dinner. My mom would cook fish, and have some kind of noodles. The noodles were long, thin noodles ... that represented longevity," Diane Kung, an Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) Literature teacher at Berkeley High School,

said. For Lunar New Year and holidays alike, food is a way to connect with everyone and cherish traditions. For Kung and others around the world, long noodles have always had a spot at Lunar New Year meals.

A bright red envelope with gold engravings of animals and characters are something else people wait for on Lunar New Year. Children often receive red envelopes on the evening of Lunar New Year from both distant and close relatives. For BHS sophomore Vivien Chiu, red envelopes have always been a part of her Lunar New Year. "We go to a restaurant, then we usually go to Chinatown to buy red envelopes, and I usually pick out the cutest ones. Then me and my dad go to the bank to get the crispiest one and two dollar bills," Chiu said.

Matthew Laurel, another AAPI Literature teacher at BHS, talked

about his recent experiences with Lunar New Year and what it means to him.

Laurel encourages all of the students in his class to celebrate Lunar New Year, regardless of their cultural background. "They don't even have to be Asian," Laurel said, "It's just about being together and eating good food ... food is really good for understanding history and culture and stories from the recipes that get passed down through generations. A lot of these students' parents are immigrants, and the things that they cook remind them of home, and that's a way to reconnect with their ancestral past together."

Often, holidays can be centralized on western history and culture, and celebrations from other parts of the world aren't highlighted or known about. "I think we're sort of trained to have these main holiday celebrations, like Christmas and Thanksgiving," Laurel said, "I think just knowing not to always centralize a Western American perspective, and that there are other important holidays that aren't part of the mainstream culture (is important). And this is why I totally embrace and encourage communities and people who don't identify as AAPI to still

enjoy and celebrate Lunar New Year."

Celebrating Lunar New Year consists of different rituals and traditions for a variety of communities. Whether it be celebrated through dinner with

*In  
the U.S.,  
about 23 million  
people celebrate Lunar  
New Year, making it one  
of the most popular  
ethnic holidays.*

family and friends, red envelopes or potlucks, the holiday is a way for people to connect with others and honor the past.

*In  
the year of  
2025, Lunar New Year  
begins on January  
19 and will last  
up to 16  
days.*

ILLUSTRATIONS BY IRIS LE LIBOUX



## WHAT MAKES INDIE MOVIES SO LIKABLE?

THEO BECERRA



Indie films, short for independent films, are movies that are made outside of major film studios. They are often lower budget, as they lack the funding from the corporate studios. Because of their separation from the mainstream, indie filmmakers use this to create a film that is different from the typical Hollywood blockbuster. These movies are known for unique plots, distinct cinematography, and unconventional themes. They often explore the human experience, and the many struggles that come with it. So, what makes these movies so appealing? And more importantly, what makes one a cult classic?

The main difference between watching an indie movie versus watching a mainstream one is the visual material. The movies are weird. They're disturbing. They're visceral. They're unique, creative, and original. They make you think!

In mainstream movies we can usually see where a plot line is going: action movie, man saves everyone; rom-com, the two unlikely characters get together because of a stroke of fate. Not that these types of movies are bad, but there are just so many of them that they get predictable. Indie films are unique in this way; they have such strange plot lines that they have you guessing what's going to happen next. Some even leave off on open-ended notes, to make you think.

Indie films often have such interesting and unusual visual effects, whether it be how a shot is specifically framed or what the overarching theme of special effects are (a great example of this would be "Scott Pilgrim vs. The World," and how the effects make it look like a video game). The way these movies are shot provoke certain feelings from the audience, whether it be loneliness or fear. Movies outside of the mainstream are so wonderful, having more creative freedoms than others might. They have a wide representation of different situations and people. They have a deeper meaning to them, outside of the plot, which is only a representation of the true theme.

To make something a cult classic, whether it is a book or movie, it has to be good. Like, really good. Something to gather a specific (and usually small) audience of people that love that piece of media. The popular indie movies fall right into this category. Beloved by a specific type of movie enjoyer, enough to where they watch it over and over again.

In all, I would suggest that you go out and watch some indie films! It truly is a feel-good activity, and the movies stick with you for a while. The characters are so unique that you might end up seeing yourself in them. The indie films I would personally suggest: "Donnie Darko," "Garden State," "Juno," "Perks of Being a Wallflower," "Little Miss Sunshine," and literally anything made by Wes Anderson.

## Dual enrollment: Expanding learning

BY DAMON HUNT  
staff writer

"College classes allow me to feel like I am actively learning information every second of every hour I spend," Dominic Winet, a Berkeley High School freshman, said. While BHS students grind AP courses, extracurriculars, and SAT prep, some take to community college courses to further their educational growth.

Community college classes allow students to study subjects that directly relate to their future career path and college major. Winet is taking Calculus 2, having recently finished Calculus 1 at Berkeley City College last semester. "The classes I take align directly with my longer-term career plans in a field heavy in computer science, mathematics, and biology," Winet said.

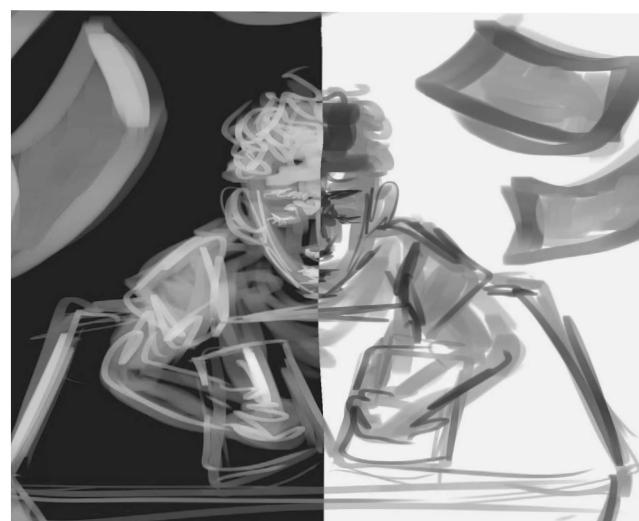
In addition to providing a more specialized education, taking classes at community colleges is also a way for students who are more advanced in subject matter to take challenging classes. "I take college classes because the curriculum offered by

BHS to the ninth grade is wildly insufficient to meet my skill level and dedication to my passions," Winet said.

Winet proposed that BHS should offer more advanced classes to freshmen if they show enough dedication and understanding of the topic. "If the restrictions of the universal ninth grade were to lessen, allowing a freshman to test into Calc AB or BC, I would take that class without a second thought over one at a local (community college)," Winet said.

Jaren Gaines, a BHS freshman taking Physics C, Linear Algebra, and Biochemistry at a community college, agreed that students in lower grades should be able to take classes at BHS based on their skill level, regardless of what year of high school they are in. "I think there should be some sort of system to allow people to skip classes or go to a class that makes more sense," Gaines said, "If (you) demonstrate the ability to do basic calculus, then you should probably go into Calculus AB, right?"

Although allowing underclassmen to take more advanced classes may be beneficial to them, unfortu-



IRIS LE LIBOUX

nately, according to Tiffany Liew, an academic counselor at BHS, it's logistically unfeasible. "It's a staffing and ... a classroom issue because there's only a certain number of classes that are offered, so priority is given to mostly upperclassmen," Liew said, "Because of that, if ninth graders take up all the spaces in higher level classes ... it further impacts what's already a limited opportunity."

Liew explained that concurrent enrollment is a great opportunity as it allows students to take more niche or advanced classes. "I think that's a wonderful resource that we offer, because as soon as you're a ninth grader, the world's your oyster ... (it's) another option for students to take more classes that interest them," Liew said.

While taking community college classes is academically rewarding to high

school students, there are also disadvantages.

Gaines mentioned that these classes require a large amount of time be dedicated to them. Due to this, community college courses interfere with Gaines' personal and extracurricular time. "It's a huge time commitment, and I'm already stretched, as is with my other extracurriculars. I essentially have no personal life because of all this," Gaines said.

While there are some drawbacks to community college courses, most students find that the rewards immensely outweigh them.

"A college class is a fantastic way to push oneself and to look for great colleges and future employers," Winet said, "If you are truly passionate and/or skilled enough for a topic to take a college class in it, the experience will launch you to the moon."

## Green Career Fair shares opportunities

BY OSCAR BALASUBRAMANIAN  
staff writer

On Monday, Jan. 14, 2025, Berkeley High School hosted a Green Career Fair. The fair took place in the exhibition hall at the BHS Community Theatre and held stands for various "green" organizations. From first period through the end of lunch, students were given a chance to explore possible careers and ask questions to professionals who work towards preserving and restoring the environment.

"I think it is important to meet students where they're at with climate change and

to not make it a niche issue, because it really is for everybody," BHS senior Ilana Nickolaus said, "We don't have to shapeshift everyone into the same kind of environmentalist ... everyone can be environmentalists in the way that they want."

The goal of the fair was to provide students with information about the earth and environment, and jobs in the green industry and environmental field. Sofia Peltz is Berkeley Unified School District's Sustainability Program Coordinator, and arranged the Green Career Fair. According to Peltz, it was specifically catered to BHS juniors and seniors interested in a career path related to the environ-

ment, and aimed to broaden students' understanding of what that entails.

"I think oftentimes ... people's first thought is working with plants or working with waste. And while that's one avenue, there are so many different jobs, for example, within the transportation field ... any environmentally related job or a green job is the goal," Peltz said.

The Sewing Room is a business focused on sustainable fashion and alternatives to fast fashion. "I love promoting the ideas behind fashion sustainability, and I'm encouraging people today to get into the fashion industry and change it. I'm bringing my business, the

Sewing Room, to the fair today because we teach sustainable practices through sewing, mending, and upcycling," Jennifer Serr, the founder of The Sewing Room, said.

Earth Team is another organization that hosted a stand at the fair. Molly Sealand is an Earth Team representative who works in tree ecology and teaches horticulture at Merritt College. Sealand's work takes her all over the Bay and to Southern California, though she mainly works from her office in Crockett.

"(The Green Career Fair) is an opportunity for me to get the word out that someone can have a career that's pretty lucrative and fun, just knowing about trees," Sealand said.

Overall the Green Career Fair was a success, with students engaging with and asking questions to the group of professionals. Students learned all about the environment and the wide range of businesses that care about the earth.

"I think this fair ... showed me an interesting job that I could take that helps the environment and has unique experiences," BHS sophomore Moses Esterson said.



The City of Berkeley hosts a booth at the Green Career Fair about their zero waste program.

JULIAN NATHAN



# Benette Williams’ rich history encompasses decades of BHS

BY AVA QUANDT  
staff writer

With 66 years of experience teaching at Berkeley High School, Benette Williams has seen BHS through several decades. She can attest to the ever changing environment in Berkeley and the increased inclusion and diversity within BHS.

Williams attended Berkeley schools her entire life and graduated from BHS in 1960.



Williams lives off the grid at home and completes all online work at school. JAHAN INGRAHAM

She recalled that Berkeley’s education system was very different back in the day — that students would take placement tests very early on and then be on one track of classes with the same group of students for the entirety of their high school career. She remembered how restrictive this system was; there wasn’t

a lot of movement from these groups of students — they were stuck in one track of classes and with the same other students.

*“... in the language department, we’re very supportive of each other. We share a lot. We work together.”*

**Benette Williams**  
*BHS Spanish Teacher*

When Williams attended BHS, there were significantly more students at the school, with her graduating class consisting of around 1,200 students. “It was really crowded, and there were no fences, (but) nobody left campus. You wouldn’t even think of leaving campus

for lunch or anything — you had to eat at school,” Williams said, “and there were two lunch periods, so half the school was out having lunch when you were in class.”

After graduating from BHS, Williams took a gap year to travel and figure out what she wanted to dedicate her life to. She ended up going to Spain with a friend, where she learned to speak Spanish. “I went around and I had a headache and just the intensity of trying to understand everything. (It) took me about two months to be somewhat comfortable,” Williams said.

After her time abroad, she began teaching Spanish at BHS in 1968.

Back in Berkeley, Williams was able to observe student reactions and protests regarding historical events like the Vietnam War. As student protests broke out all over the country, Williams recalled University of California Berkeley students participating in several protests and demon-



Benette Williams’ senior portrait, 1960

strations. The civil rights movement was also prevalent during the early years of Williams’

teaching career at BHS. Not only did the civil rights movement involve student walkouts and protests, but it caused change in the community at BHS. Williams remembered that BHS, especially before the civil rights movement, used to be a lot more segregated.

Not only were there clubs that acted in similar ways to fraternities and sororities, but there were also no small schools within BHS yet. The first small schools at BHS were established in the 2000s, and over time different small schools have been added while others have been phased out.

Overall, Williams has experienced different versions of BHS across many decades. But what has kept her coming back to teach each year are her students. Williams also reflected on her appreciation for her colleagues and the connections she shares with them. “I think in the language department, we’re very supportive of each other. We share a lot. We work together,” Williams said.

# LGBTQIA+ Lit provides close-knit, supportive environment

BY NIALA LENZ-RASHID  
staff writer

“In the current political climate in the United States where there’s so much legislation against LGBTQIA+ people, it feels really important to have a space carved out in our day where we can experience queer joy,” said Jenn Hartman, a Queer Literature teacher at Berkeley High School, “It’s really important for me that students exit my class with a greater sense of community, a sense of continuity, and solidarity with queer experiences.”

The class was introduced to BHS three years ago, during the 2022-23 school year. Hartman felt it was important for students to be reading and comprehending literature that is a reflection of the LGBTQIA+ community. Hartman be-

lieves being able to relate and identify with topics discussed throughout certain forms of literature can make it much easier for students to connect with the studied material.

With their class, Hartman makes a distinctive effort to pick and choose topics and projects that they feel will resonate with their students deeply. They are able to peak their students’ interest while teaching them crucial and historically neglected lessons surrounding queer culture and history.

“We’re getting ready to do literature circles, we watch a lot of documentaries, we go on field trips, I try to make it as interdisciplinary as possible, I try to fit it all in, and I also try to build in a lot of student choice,” Hartman said.

Hartman’s students profoundly recognize and ap-

preciate their efforts as an educator to make this class fun, interactive, and interesting, all while remaining educational and informative. Those who have made the choice to take this class over a standard English class don’t regret their choice. Several recommend the class to other BHS students so that they too can open themselves up to the beautiful recollection of queer history and culture that Hartman offers.

“(AP Language classes are) just a lot quieter, it’s just kind of a very different vibe. With Queer Lit, we all know that we have something in common, which is an interest in Queer history and literature,” Eva Patrick said, a BHS senior and former student of Hartman.

Patrick, who was a very active participant in Queer Lit the previous year, discussed



Queer Lit students recently read “Last Night at the Telegraph Club” by Malinda Lo. ZOE KOHLMAYER

how the small class size made for a very close-knit community, one that thrived on acceptance and friendship.

“I think (it was) the best choice that I could have made. For English class in junior year, you don’t really get small class sizes, so having an option for that is very nice,” Patrick said, “A lot of it was individual work, but (we were) very much encouraged to talk with people.”

With such a close community comes the eventual ease of new friendships and a new space that is not only accepting, but also inventive, interesting, and educational, which Patrick acknowledged and appreciated.

“I think it is probably the best queer community on campus, (and) I would recommend it to most people, even if you’re not queer, because it’s

just a good class,” Patrick said.

Many other current Queer Lit student perspectives were similar. Allison Gomez, a BHS junior who is currently enrolled in Queer Lit, conveyed how beneficial the class has been to the acceptance of her own identity. The accessibility of information on Queer history, literature, and culture,

*“It’s really important for me that students exit my class with a greater sense of community ... and solidarity with queer experiences.”*

**Jenn Hartman**  
*BHS Queer Lit Teacher*

helped to scratch an itch Gomez hadn’t realized she’d had.

“I like the class because there’s like a bunch of people that I can just relate to,” Gomez said, “When I leave I always think, wow that felt really

short, time flies when you’re having fun somewhere, (and) I never realized how much fun I have in that class.”

Though both Hartman and the students of Queer Lit speak highly of the class’s inviting community and riveting curriculum, the class struggles with student enrollment, according to Hartman.

Though accomplishing the establishment of this class as a part of the Berkeley High Elective and English Departments wasn’t particularly challenging, according to Hartman, keeping the class is proving to be. Unless enrollment rises in the next several years, this historically significant class, and the inclusive, supportive community it creates, may unfortunately cease to exist.



Jenn Hartman poses in front of the rainbow colored Queer Lit Sign in their classroom. ZOE KOHLMAYER



# ENTERTAINMENT

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## APPS OF OUR CURRENT ERA: BLOCK BLAST

CHLOE PRENDERGAST



Why is everyone so obsessed with Block Blast? Block Blast is a game that was originally released in 2022 but has gained significant popularity in the last year. As of now it has 200 million players worldwide. That's almost as big as the entire population of Brazil! If you've never played the game it's similar to Tetris where the players must fit different sized pieces onto a eight by eight grid. But the key is that if you get a full row of blocks then they get cleared and give you more space. This makes the player feel like the game is never ending, a common technique used in games to hook the player.

I talked to two of my friends who both have the app. Mayssa Harrati is a BHS freshman who has a high score of 17,176. He said, "It's really addictive because it's simple and easy to play, and you don't need WiFi which is nice because the school WiFi is really bad." It's so easy to play if you have a quick break, because the game saves your progress and you can play it anywhere. I also talked to Anya Wagner who has a high score of 30,539 and she said, "It's really addictive. You're constantly wanting to get a new high score and beat your friends." This feature is a key draw for Block Blast. When you're playing against yourself you always have room to improve, so in that sense it's a never ending game. It also makes you use your brain and actually strategize which has been lost with a lot of modern online games.

Let's talk about the actual science of why it's so addictive. When you beat a high score or pass a level of a game it releases dopamine in your brain, which is basically like the happy chemical. Also the game is designed in such a way that you could keep playing forever, the game will always give you blocks that will fit if you place them right. This is similar to certain social media apps where you can scroll through videos endlessly. I have also seen a lot of videos where someone is talking while you watch them playing Block Blast, this is like seeing videos where on one side it's the actual video and on the other is someone playing Subway Surfers. This is called sludge content, they are very attention grabbing and overstimulate your brain. At the moment these videos might be addictive but in the long run they are declining our attention span.

How long will this trend last? Well, do you remember the Watermelon game? Maybe you were also addicted to it a year or so ago but the design of the game it's very similar to Block Blast. They are both based on the idea of beating your high score. I think that Block Blast will have a similar trajectory of popularity to the Watermelon game. It might be really popular right now but in a few months there will be a new game that everyone's obsessed with, probably with a similar objective, just a different layout or aesthetic.

## Berkeley High School students unleash creative talents through arts and crafts

BY AKHILA NARAYAN  
staff writer

Berkeley High School sophomore Rainier Townsend spent three years on her most recent crochet project. "It just makes me so happy to finish something and be like, 'I put so many hours into this,'" she said.

Townsend was taught to crochet and embroider by her grandmother in 2019. The crocheted blanket which she just completed has a granny square pattern in shades of turquoise, purple, blue, and pink. "Anyone can (crochet). It just takes a little bit of effort, and then you can really make anything you want," she said.

Those who work very hard at crafting can produce truly impressive pieces. BHS junior Adalilly Chu, who makes jewelery, saw this when she co-organized the BHS craft fair in October. "I would never expect there to be so many people who can make such amazing things at (BHS) ... It was just really interesting to see how many people are so passionate about making jewelry or drawing, or selling their paintings," Chu said.

Natalie Caton is a BHS junior who started print-

making over the summer. At a recent craft fair, she sold t-shirts and prints. She said, "I just mostly make things that are pleasing to me, things that I would want to have."

Caton decorates with her prints, which often feature plants and animals. However, printmaking can be used for other purposes as well. "I know printmaking is used for a lot of activism and also for general knowledge, like posters," Caton said.

Lillian Hammond, another BHS junior, tries to do good by using her sewing skills to innovate and remove herself from the cycle of fast fashion. "Some of the clothes that I outgrow or don't really like anymore, I then repurpose into different clothes or accessories, like headbands ... I had this one pair of pajama pants, and then I outgrew them, so then I turned them into shorts, and then I didn't like them as shorts, so then I turned them into a shirt," Hammond said.

During the pandemic, when she first began sewing, Hammond made masks. "It's really helpful because you can easily listen to music and sew. And that was really calming and was a nice distraction from really not being able to go anywhere

or do anything during the pandemic," Hammond said.

Chu, Caton, and Townsend also use their craft to relieve stress. Chu finds crafting more gratifying than other forms of relaxation. "It's kind of boring to just watch TV. I started making jewelry because it's really fun. It's like you're feeling productive at the same time while you're

watching TV."

Hammond particularly enjoys the feeling of creating something with her hands saying, "Because so many things are machine run or just made with high demand and very low quality, I think being able to sew and make my own clothes is really valuable because not a whole lot of people can do that."



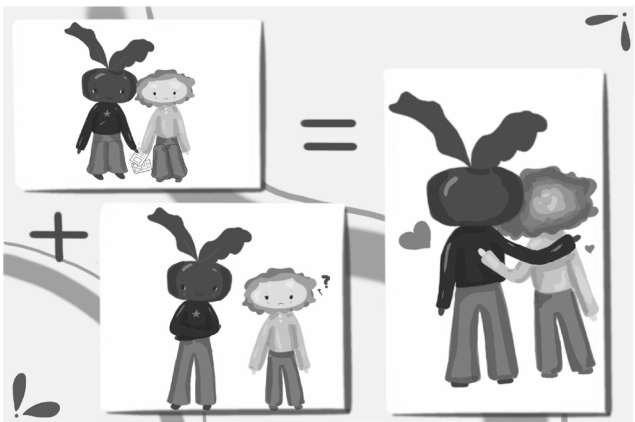
Lillian Hammond displays her handmade shirt.



Natalie Caton reviews one of her prints.

IDA MARSHALL-LAPPE

## Romance novels: The comfort of cliché



MIA BLATT

BY LILA GENBERG  
staff writer

After reading many romance novels, it becomes easy to guess the ending early on. The childhood best friends? Definitely going to end up together. The forbidden lovers? Probably going to find a way to make it work, even with the odds stacked against them. But maybe readers do not choose to read romance novels for the surprise, but rather because they know what to expect. This raises an interesting question: is the predictability of romance novels drag-

ging them down, or is it that predictability that makes people fall in love with them?

Aliya Freyman, a sophomore at Berkeley High School, thinks that these tropes can go both ways. "I think a lot of the tropes are repeated a lot, friends to lovers, enemies to lovers — like all of that definitely is cliché and pretty overused," she said. Although tropes of that type are very common, some may argue that this is the magic in romance books. People love tropes so much because of the familiarity that comes with the predictable plot. As Ally-

son Bogie, teacher librarian at BHS said, "When you're thinking, I wanna read a book, but I just want to chill and relax and not have to think about it too much, (romance novels are great)."

As Cara Likas, BHS sophomore, said, "I think that stuff is what people want. Like, you're not picking up a romance novel expecting some crazy twist, you want the repetitive stuff, and that's sorta what makes it fun." It is similar to clicking on a true crime show on Netflix, you know what to expect because you chose it. There's no true crime documentary with an enemies to lovers couple that makes it work and lives happily ever after. It is the same with romance novels. Imagine picking up the newest release from a well-known romance author, something with a title like "The Unexpected Spark" or "The Summer I Fell for You", and opening it only to find a written version of Squid Games season two, it would be jarring. These predictable

romance tropes are what we have come to expect, and can be a motivating factor to read certain books.

Despite the fact that these cliches can often be good things, Freyman believes the outcome of the book depends heavily on the author, "Honestly, I think it depends on the author, and it can go either way depending on how the book is written," she said. For example, the books of a big romance novel writer currently, Emily Henry, walk the line between being just different enough to avoid being formulaic and repetitive, while still sticking to mainstream tropes. Simply put, tropes are popular because readers like them; therefore, it makes sense for romance writers to include them.

Overall, whether one holds the stance that predictable "copy and paste" romance novels are repetitive and unimaginative, or if you love the comforting nature they hold, in the world of books, there's always something for everyone.



# ‘Squid Game’ season two: More carnage, less social commentary

BY SIMON VAN DUSEN  
staff writer

During the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, a Korean TV show with a very unique concept was released. Titled “Squid Game,” the show follows a game in which Korea’s lower class population are targeted to play children’s games and compete for a large sum of money. The twist is, those who lose the games are killed, making everything extremely high stakes. The show was wildly popular for its captivating plot and characters, but the root of “Squid Game” is a social commentary on class inequalities.

The worldwide phenomenon debuted as the number one TV show in 92 different regions, breaking many records on Netflix. It amassed 256.2 million views in its first 90 days, becoming a key part of pop culture and the subject of social media

discourse. While there were many good surface level aspects of the show, it also asked important questions about economic status and the class divide. A plot twist in the show reveals that the games

*The show was wildly popular for its captivating plot and characters, but the root of “Squid Game” is a social commentary on class inequalities.*

are only held to provide entertainment for a group of extremely wealthy men, called the VIPs. They laugh and cheer at the expense of the lives of the unfortunate contestants. For the players, it is a matter of life and death

*The much gorier second season also has an unsatisfying ending.*

— they are risking their lives for a chance to pay off sinking debts — but for the VIPs it’s just another form of entertainment. This dynamic

emphasizes the vastly different life experiences of two different classes. Due to the immense success of the show, the creators decided that just one season was not enough. On Thursday, Dec. 26, 2024, Squid Game Season Two was released, attracting many of its fans from the first season. The show continues with its original primary character as well as an entirely new ensemble, and a similar plot. However, the most important part of the show seems to be missing: the social commentary. With the VIPs having a total of zero minutes of screentime across the whole second season, it seems as if the writers have tried to erase that section of the plot. Instead, it focuses on a bloody revenge arc for the main character, who has been scarred from his experiences in the squid games. It turns out that those who win are changed so much from their expe-

rience, no amount of the prize money can solve their problems. The much gorier second season also has an unsatisfying ending. Nevertheless, a season three has been announced to come out in July 2025, as a finale to the series. Hopefully the finale will tie up the plot while also adding more elements of societal analysis.



COURTESY OF SIREN PICTURES AND FIRSTMAN STUDIO

# The interwoven nature of digital and traditional art mediums

BY ZOE WHITMAN  
staff writer

You can chuck paint at a canvas, but how does one throw paint at an iPad? Digital versus traditional art is a topic hotly debated amongst the art world. Museums such as the Whitney Museum of American Art have digital art lining their walls, while other institutions like the Louvre Museum are world-renowned for their traditional paintings. One of the few recognizable names in digital art is David Hockney, who is known for his use of vibrant colors and employing various forms of technology in his work. In an interview with Anders Kold, the curator of the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Hockney said, “The iPad made me draw a

lot more.” Artists like Maurice Benayoun, a French new-media artist, take digital creativity to the next level. Benayoun creates animations that are not possible traditionally, as he combines different media; including immersive virtual reality, computer graphics, and 3D printing. Digital art, as it is a

broad concept, usually refers to any type of

art where technology was involved in the end result. On the other hand, traditional art involves little to no technological input. So how do artists find their medium, or in some cases, their mediums? Berkeley High School junior, Mags Metcalf-Tobin, has his own style of traditional art that he describes as unique. He considers traditional art more accessible.

“I would say traditional art is easier to start,” Metcalf-Tobin said, “I just feel like it’s more real.” While many people want to learn how to make digital art, Metcalf-Tobin believes traditionally art is currently more widespread. BHS junior Moss Vorobyeva takes International Baccalaureate Studio Art and has been pursuing art for a lot of his life. Vorobyeva has tried both forms of art, digital and traditional, and can easily pinpoint the benefits of digital art. “It’s much more forgiving. With the layers and (the ability of) undoing, there’s a lot less planning required. You can have no idea what you’re doing, and then it’s like, ‘Okay, let’s try these colors. Let’s try these colors,’ because you can play around a lot,” Vorobyeva said. Vorobyeva also noted how interconnected different styles of the art world can be.

“I believe everyone, even digital artists, should have a paper sketchbook. It’s hard-

*“I believe everyone, even digital artists, should have a paper sketchbook. It’s harder to learn if you keep deleting and erasing or not committing to things. And with digital art it’s much easier to doubt yourself and delete it all.”*

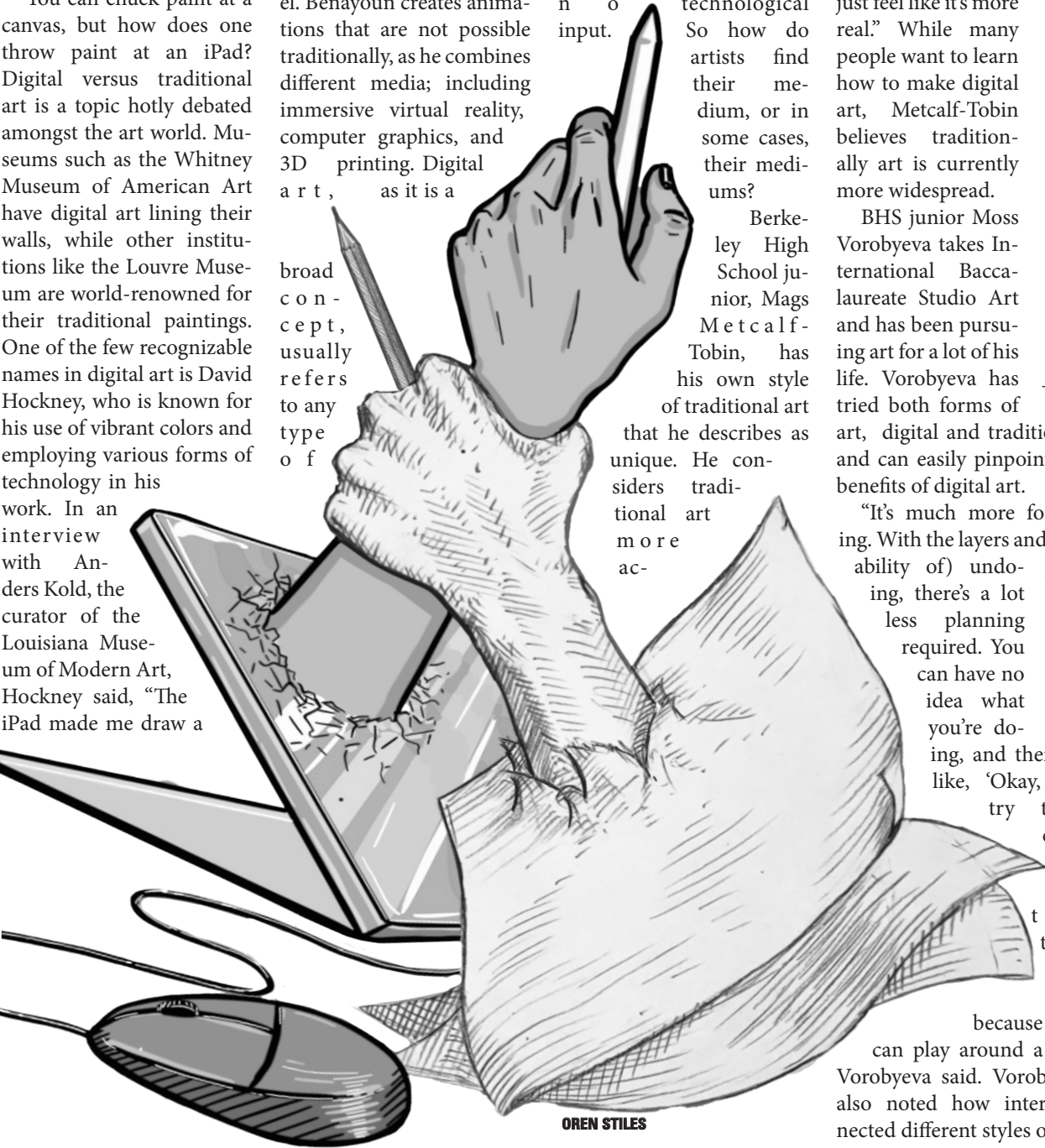
Moss Vorobyeva  
BHS junior

er to learn if you keep deleting and erasing or not committing to things. And with digital art it’s much easier to doubt yourself and delete it

*Digital and traditional art are interwoven ideas; you can’t truly put any art into one box.*

all,” Vorobyeva said. There is a sense of admiration on both sides of the spectrum. BHS junior Elizabeth Sullivan spoke about how both traditional and digital art are beautiful mediums. “I admire digital art, but I don’t do it,” Sullivan said. She is a traditional artist who brings art to many in the club she helped start called, Canvas Club. “When my friends and I started the Canvas Club, an art club

intended to distribute traditional art supplies to BHS students, we found a method to connect with others in a meaningful way. Through art,” Sullivan said. For Sullivan, it is very important for artists to be able to connect with a like minded community. When comparing digital and traditional art, many do so with a rival mentality, weighing the pros and cons of each and trying to determine a winner. Many artists, however, start off with paint on a canvas and then use that traditional concept to move towards a digital piece. Digital and traditional art are interwoven ideas; you can’t truly put any art into one box. While some may see digital art as just drawing on a computer screen, there is more to be done digitally than that. The same is to be said with traditional art. Performance art that projects images and videos or a live painting where visitors can watch their process are examples of traditional art with a unique twist. Nowadays, artists can break the boundaries of visual art and subvert the norm, which will lead to more beautiful, innovative works in the years to come.





# Biopic ‘A Complete Unknown:’ Immersive but half-baked

BY SOPHIE MIRZA  
staff writer

Throughout his career, Bob Dylan created an image of himself in which he never had one persona but several. His allusive and shifting personality has provided various directors with a sparse canvas on which they can paint their own iteration of Dylan. These include D.A. Pennebaker’s documentary “Don’t Look Back,” Todd Haynes’s “I’m Not There,” and to a looser degree, the Coen brothers’ “Inside Llewyn Davis.” In late December, James Mangold’s Dylan — a more one-note, straightforward version — hit the big screen. Timothée Chalamet plays Dylan as he moves to New York with a guitar and dream, begins to interact with key folk figureheads, and rises to fame, making multiple controversial choices along the way. “A Complete Unknown” is a film that generally fol-

lows a conventional biopic structure and intention, providing a rough overview of a snapshot of the protagonist’s life, focusing on straightforwardness rather than authenticity and complexity. The story centers around his relationships with Joan Baez and Pete Seeger, the destruction brought by fame, and his fallout with his folk roots. The film primarily shines in its performances and sixties word building. In “A Complete Unknown,” Mangold appeals to audiences less familiar with Dylan through utilizing his connection to the historical period, albeit superficially. With effective historical costuming and magnificent set design, “A Complete Unknown” has the effect of making the audience want to be transported to the time period. Despite the stellar performances — particularly Chalamet’s enigmatic Dylan, Fanning’s heartfelt Russo, and Norton’s both gentle and later disappoint-

ed Seeger — the characters lack sufficient exploration and have a tendency to feel one dimensional. By the end, the audience is left with an unfinished rendition of who Dylan is. As a rebellious figure, Dylan didn’t wish to be defined by the protest music that began his career. At the climax, Dylan and Baez perform at the 1965 Newport Folk Festival, and upon his transition from folk to rock and roll, ignites disappointment from his forefather, Seeger. As Dylan began to release albums like his 1969 “Nashville Skyline,” he travelled further into his own, less clearly defined musical territory by going electric. Although the film acknowledges the influences of Seeger and Guthrie, it delves less into the political influence of Suze Rotolo — fictional Sylvie Russo — who first immersed Dylan in the political scene. Additionally, it fails to meaningfully address details of



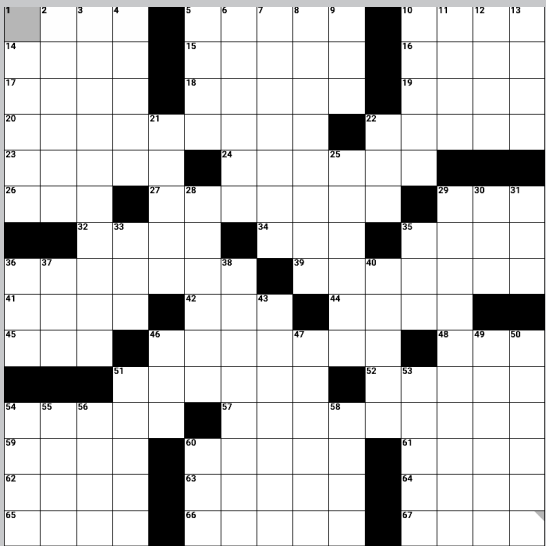
COURTESY OF SEARCHLIGHT PICTURES

the Civil Rights Movement, which had more than a brief impact on Dylan’s life and art. Despite these factors, “A Complete Unknown” makes what it can from Dylan’s complex history. As someone with several sides to his personality and experienced several phases throughout

history, making a film that attempts to address everything wouldn’t be possible. The film is especially good at providing younger viewers a glimpse of what the time period was like and Dylan’s relevance. Though Dylan purists, superfans or historians will reasonably see Man-

gold’s Dylan as more of a caricature, “A Complete Unknown” showcases stellar performances and world-building that make it stand out. It is a film that provides those less familiar with its subject matter an escape into a different time, despite being composed of half-baked interpretations.

## THE CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- 1. Media you wouldn’t want to consume in the office
- 5. Collect
- 10. Muscles Terry Crews can flex
- 14. “That’s not \_\_\_\_\_!” (parent’s warning)
- 15. Tool used by San Francisco cars
- 16. Fencer’s weapon
- 17. Flat-topped hill
- 18. Find the sum of
- 19. Helper
- 20. Southeast Asian country independent from both Portugal and Indonesia
- 22. Secretly added to an email chain
- 23. Large Japanese dog breed
- 24. One who feels deeply for others
- 26. Encryption standard
- 27. Objects produced in “The Lorax”
- 29. Khan Academy CEO
- 32. Furniture store that sells Swedish meatballs
- 34. Flanders on “The Simpsons”
- 35. \_\_\_\_\_ Studios (luxury fashion house)
- 36. Biblical figure brought back to life by Jesus
- 39. Teenage witch
- 41. Follow the rules
- 42. Video game letters
- 44. First or second on a ship
- 45. \_\_\_\_\_ XING
- 46. Believer in a strong central government
- 48. Steal
- 51. Black currant liqueur
- 52. Final part of a song
- 54. Fix, as in a device
- 57. Classic diner on Fourth Street
- 59. At any time
- 60. Like a tattoo
- 61. Flying things that aren’t planes
- 62. Comedian Bargatze
- 63. Fraction
- 64. “Fine \_\_\_\_\_” (2019 Harry Styles album)
- 65. Chemical suffixes
- 66. Mail entrances
- 67. Computer hardware company

DOWN

- 1. Appoint publicly
- 2. Rare meats?
- 3. Like dinosaur bones
- 4. Western lawman Earp
- 5. Berry in a bowl
- 6. Lunatics
- 7. Largest cavity in the body
- 8. 7-11 beverage
- 9. Month before Oct.
- 10. Furry fruit
- 11. Like the Odyssey or the Aeneid
- 12. Surrender (to)
- 13. Homophone of 12-down
- 21. Tot for a tot?
- 22. Boy band featuring Jungkook and Jimin
- 25. Wednesday or Gomez
- 28. Ghosts someone?
- 29. The \_\_\_\_\_ method
- 30. Ragged doll
- 31. “Glee” actress Michele
- 33. “Alright”
- 35. Singer-songwriter Garfunkel
- 36. Chop (off)
- 37. Honest prez
- 38. Persimmons or oranges, currently
- 40. Tossed stick
- 43. Don’t stray away from
- 46. Hang loose
- 47. Response to “Look!”
- 49. “\_\_\_\_\_ and the same”
- 50. Nintendo antagonist
- 51. “Solves,” as a disease
- 53. Palate dangler
- 54. Refuse to admit (to)
- 55. “American Horror Story” actor Peters
- 56. \_\_\_\_\_ noire
- 58. Hubbubs
- 60. Tax enforcers

— Violet Kessler

## ARTIST SPOTLIGHT



LUCAS THOMPSON

Kirby Duncan shares his experience working with the performing arts programs at Berkeley High School. As a BHS sophomore, Duncan has been exploring the Visual and Performing Arts program for two years and has grown to love the group of people that share his interests. “It’s really fun to just be on your own and be like, ‘I’m nailing this scene,’ or ‘I’m nailing this song, I’m doing my best, and I get to go show it off to other people,’ But it’s also really fun to work with people on this performance that you all collectively love,” said Duncan. Duncan explained that this was not his first time in any theater program. Duncan grew up in a household that was invested in the performing arts. His mother in the past was a puppeteer, and his father still plays music today. “I would make puppets with all my friends, and then we’d put on a puppet show,” said Duncan. Duncan has also been exploring more opportunities to choreograph. He created some choreography for the BHS production of “Urinetown,” and this upcoming spring he will be choreographing four pieces in “Hadestown.” Duncan shared his strategy on how to come up with choreography. “I listen to it over and over and over, and I sort of map out the different counts,” Duncan explained. Many people know that pursuing theater as a career can be quite challenging. “The general consensus is that you really, really have to want it, you really have to go for it, and you have to be good at it.” Duncan said. Duncan fully intends to continue with performing arts in some way post graduation.

— Tejal Dopman



# Berkeley hosts wrestling duals

BY MILES WISE  
staff writer

On Wednesday, Jan. 15, 2025, Berkeley High School’s varsity wrestling team faced off against San Lorenzo High School and Arroyo High School in a much anticipated and energetic duals meet. The event was a tri-meet, which meant that the wrestlers competed against opponents from their weight class, with the victory being awarded to the school that amassed the most total points. In this competition, Berkeley, Arroyo, and San Lorenzo High School faced off in separate matchups, with each school going head-to-head against one another.

BHS first squared off against San Lorenzo, and came out the gate strong with multiple BHS wrestlers winning points through takedowns, and pinning their opponents, claiming victories. From that point on, San Lorenzo struggled to close the point gap, and the BHS wrestlers continued to come out on top. “In the

first match against San Lorenzo, I think we did really well. I like a lot of our performances there,” said second year BHS wrestler and sophomore Seigo Lee. Siena Ingraham, first year wrestler and BHS freshman, added, “We started off strong. It was really good to be honest, as a lot of the other team forfeited.”

After securing the team victory over San Lorenzo, Berkeley then faced off against Arroyo High School. Arroyo started off with their foot on the gas, claiming multiple victories over Berkeley in the lower weight classes. Despite the deficit, Berkeley ignited a comeback, led by team captain and BHS senior Charlie Gittelsohn, along with BHS juniors Ben Blair and Jared Huang. As the weight classes increased, each match grew in length and started to become more intense. However, despite Berkeley’s efforts, in the last few matches, Arroyo regained the lead. “It was really close until the last three matches. We were getting slammed a bit, but it was really close with some

crazy matches,” BHS freshman Max Snow said. By the end of the event, the Arroyo boys and girls varsity teams both defeated BHS, with the final scores of 56-23 and 30-12.

Reflecting upon BHS’s performance, Lee commented, “The reason we lost a lot of the matches is we forgot to stick to the basics ... working on the fundamentals is the thing we forgot to do, as well as being consistent.” Similarly, third year wrestler Giovane Gaspar Vasquez echoed this emphasis on fundamentals, and shared the team’s game plan moving forward. “We’re just going to try and get better and go over the fundamentals again ... we’re a really closely knit team, so we’re gonna support each other out,” he said.

In the end, BHS boys and girls varsity team finished the day with victories over San Lorenzo High and fell short against Arroyo High School. Despite the setback, the team looks to focus on honing their fundamentals skills as they prepare for future matches.



BHS freshman Max Snow ties up with an opponent. JACOB GRANT



Rhinos Rugby team running drills at practice. SEBASTIAN FLETCHER

# Rhinos rugby team introduces new sport to Berkeley teenagers

BY SOPHIE CRANLEY  
staff writer

Around the halls of Berkeley High School recently, there have been a slew of posters promoting the Rhinos Rugby team. The Rhinos are local to the Bay Area and are coming up on their 40th anniversary. They offer rugby coaching and teams to players of all skill levels and ages. Rugby, both in Berkeley and across the United States, has historically been a sport with a smaller following — but the Rhinos are working to change that.

Rugby shares many similarities with American football, but there are a few key differences, including no blocking in Rugby and a rule that only allows the player with the ball to be tackled. Rugby matches are played with 15 players on the field per team, and each match consists of two 40-minute halves.

Jonas Torke, a BHS junior, plays flanker for the

Rhinos. A flanker’s role is focused on making tackles and retrieving the ball from the opposition. Torke self-described his position as “the smallest of the big guys.” William Graham, a BHS senior, plays both as a forward and a backer. Forwards are in charge of getting and keeping the ball, whilst backers attempt to score. When asked about the Rhinos’ connection to BHS, Torke clarified, “The Berkeley Rhinos doesn’t have a direct affiliation with Berkeley High (School). We recruit from a bunch of high schools around the Bay Area, which is great because I get to meet and play with guys from all over.” Graham echoed this sentiment, saying, “I might never have talked to some of these people, but through rugby we are all friends.”

Torke values the camaraderie that comes with being part of the Rhinos, and he gave special recognition to Head Coach Chris Dempster. “It’s really important to have good team synergy

and communication,” Torke said, “I think the Rhinos have that down.”

Like football, rugby is an intensely physical and contact-heavy sport. The risk of injury is always present, and all players have had firsthand experiences with different types of injuries. As a football and rugby player, Graham shared, “Football injuries are less common and last longer, while rugby injuries happen more but are less serious.” Torke also has experience with injuries, having sprained his MCL. Torke reflected, “With any contact sport, but especially rugby, you have to understand that injuries are part of the game. It’s just the nature of the sport.”

As the Rhinos Rugby team celebrates its 40th anniversary, their commitment to fostering talent and community has a growing impact on the future of the sport in the Bay Area. With a focus on friendship, the Rhinos are creating opportunities for players to thrive both on and off the field.

# Girls basketball defeats San Lorenzo 56-15 in impressive game

BY CEDAR GILMOUR  
staff writer

On Friday, Jan. 10, 2025, Berkeley High School girls varsity basketball team took on the San Lorenzo High School Grizzlies in the Donahue Gym, where the Yellowjackets showcased their skills from start to finish.

BHS showed no shortage of team effort, despite their captain being absent due to injury. Their strong defense was relentless and set the tone for the entire game. The Jackets maintained a strong lead the whole night, ultimately resulting in a victory.

The Jackets’ aggressive defense often featured double-teaming the ball, which caused many turnovers in our favor. “Our defensive

strategy was to press and to set traps to get the ball easier,” BHS junior Giselle Lopez said. The point guard played a key role on the court’s defensive end.

BHS junior Jae Marie Howard was a vital playmaker on the Jackets’ offense, constantly looking to find open teammates. She made crucial passes, which ultimately benefited the team’s offensive execution.

By halftime, the Jackets established a dominating 26-6 lead, thanks to their relentless defense and unselfish collaboration on offense. “I would say that my team worked pretty well together,” Lopez said, “Our offensive strategy was to pass the ball until someone got open and not to take the first open shot.” This patient approach allowed the Jackets

to look for the best opportunities, rather than rushing bad shots.

Meanwhile, positive energy from the stands and the bench only added to their momentum. On the bench, teammates were vocal and supportive, celebrating each point and defensive stop. This strong team dynamic can be attributed to team huddles, discussions, and team bonding events off the court, according to Lopez.

Offensively, BHS continued to work as a unit, passing the ball and getting shots off. BHS junior Najuna Kiggundu executed multiple breakaways from defense and finished with two easy points each time. “We just came into the game wanting to win, and wanting to work together as a team,” Kiggundu said, capturing

the mindset the team had before and throughout the game.

“We lost by one point on Wednesday, so we all wanted that win,” Kiggundu added, showing the team’s motivation to bounce back from a tough loss endured previously in the week against

Antioch High School.

BHS sophomore Ellie Kim-Turnoff and BHS junior Dalasia McDonald were also key contributors to the Jackets’ offense, accumulating points throughout the second half of the game.

As the final buzzer sounded, the Jackets se-

cured a 56-15 victory, with the Grizzlies never seeming to gain momentum, as the Jackets’ solid defensive game held them to only 15 points. “I feel like we can only get better from here,” Lopez said after the game, expressing the team’s confidence for the rest of the season.



A'Nyjah Johnson dribbles up the court. USNEA MCEWEN



# Sailing team harnesses waves within supportive community

BY REECE FONG  
staff writer

Success in sailing depends on mastering the wind, water, and sails. It is a distinctive sport that requires teamwork, technique, and balance. However, the sport has many unique necessities that can limit accessibility, such as access to large bodies of water, expensive boats, sails, oars, and a sailing federation or yacht club to sail out of. Because of these conditions, students aren't usually exposed to the opportunity to sail, and many are unaware that Berkeley High School has a local sailing team.

To sail, one must harness the wind to glide across the water. At BHS, most sailors navigate two-person boats, with one person steering and the other managing the sails. "Teamwork is key," explained Amy Dreskin, a parent volunteer, "you need to communicate constantly, especially since you might sail with different partners." In order to master sailing, one must build confidence and an understanding of how the water moves. The need for this balance ensures that every practice and competition is a diverse lesson in collaboration and strategy.

The BHS sailing team was founded a few years ago by a small group of sailors. This year, they made the switch from practicing at Richmond Yacht Club to Encinal Yacht Club.

BHS sophomore Lila Rodet, the team's captain, explained, "When I first joined, there weren't a lot of people; it was kind of dying out. But now, we have more members, and it feels like the team is growing and improving." Rodet practices three times a week and emphasized the importance of teamwork, saying, "You really need to be able to work well with your partner." While the team is not officially

recognized as a club or sport by BHS, its members remain dedicated. Rodet stated, "I would really want to change that, recognizing it as a sport at (BHS)," adding that the team currently isn't funded, making participation more costly.

According to BHS sophomore Emilio Bottrell-Rogers, "Sailing was really fun for me, and continues to be really fun for me,

because sailing is a lot more about how you apply your body, than raw physical strength ... It's more about tactics, timing, and being aware." He shared that although he had been sailing recreationally for a few years before joining the team, the BHS sailing team taught him how to sail competitively. "Sailing is, to me, one of the most tactical sports out there," Bottrell-Rogers said, "half of our practice time is spent talking about strategy, rules, and tactics. That's really, really interesting and challenging, and it changes the way I think about things ... I complain about having to rig, launch, and pull boats out of the water but even so, it's really fun when you have to learn how to do it a new way."

Sailing competitions are called regattas, which are a series of timed boat races, typically involving multiple teams or clubs. Regattas can feature many different types of boats, including sailboats, rowboats, and even yachts, depend-

ing on the specific event. These competitions are usually organized by sailing clubs, organizations, or event committees. The BHS club sailing team has demonstrated impressive skill, consistently achieving strong placements in recent regattas. "There was a regatta not long ago where we got third place overall, which is amazing, a lot of wind. And there was a big storm that day," Rodet said, "And recently we went to a regional regatta where we got fifth place overall, which was very nice, definitely, because a lot of (sailors) were there competing."

The sailing program has not yet received the recognition or funding it hopes for, but its dedicated members continue to excel in both skill and teamwork. With its unique blend of strategy, technique, and collaboration, the team represents a chance for students to challenge themselves in a sport that's as mentally demanding as it is physically. Sailing provides an opportunity to explore challenging new concepts and be part of a diverse group of people, united by the common appreciation for harnessing waves.



BHS sailing team sails boats out of Encinal Yacht Club.

GEORGIA PAULOS



SYLVA ROUBINIAN

## ALLEGRA HONG ATHLETE PROFILE

Allegra Hong is a Berkeley High School senior and captain of the BHS girls varsity soccer team. It was watching her mother play soccer at local fields that inspired Hong to start playing soccer herself in fourth grade. Growing up, Hong learned to be a leader through taking care of her siblings, "I've always kind of helped my mom raise my sisters because I don't have my dad in the picture, that gave me the leadership qualities that I bring on the soccer field," Hong said. Additionally, she shared that her natural competitiveness is a quality that helps her play aggressively and with intensity while on the field. However, being competitive can lead to Hong struggling emotionally in tough times. "It can feel like I'm over pressuring myself to be the best," she said. Despite the high pressure, Hong loves to play with her team and leads by example with her strong work ethic. She pushes her teammates to the next level, while showing that she believes in them and supports them daily. For Hong, the most rewarding part of playing with the BHS girls varsity soccer team is experiencing success through building trust and putting in the work. Hong said, "The biggest improvement we've made is having each other's backs regardless, and playing as a group instead of individuals trying to make something happen."

— Kesi Humphreys