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ENTERTAINMENT

A vibrant orange and red background with the words "DANCE PRODUCTION" in large, white, outlined capital letters. In the foreground, five black silhouettes of dancers in various poses are visible, some sitting on chairs.

Go to **PAGE 12** to read more about the Dance Production Show, "Dancing Through the Decades"

**PHOTO BY JULIAN
NATHAN**
staff photographer

INVESTIGATIVE

BHS Small School lottery: Integral, imperfect, but evolving

BY ELSIE YUEN
staff writer

Small schools are an ingrained and essential part of Berkeley High School. Originally established in the 2000s, they were intended to close the achievement gap between white students and students of color, according to the book “Unfinished Business: Closing the Achievement Gap in our Schools,” by New York University professor Pedro A. Noguera and Jean Yone-mura Wing, Oakland Unified School District’s Manager of Research and Best Practices for the New School Development Group.

Over time, the small schools' purpose and meaning in the BHS community has evolved, but they remain an integral part of BHS life. "I think the small school that you're in has a big impact on your experience as a student, because that's your community," Kiernan Rok, BHS vice principal, said, "I think in some ways, it becomes part of your identity as a student ... by the end of senior year, students really identify with (their) small school."

John Tobias, Academy of Medicine and Public Service co-lead and a U.S. History teacher, explained that it's important to give students

choices about how they learn.

“You have students with different needs and interests, and so I think (that the) small school system helps students pursue those interests and kind of tailor high school and be the way they want it to be,” Tobias said.

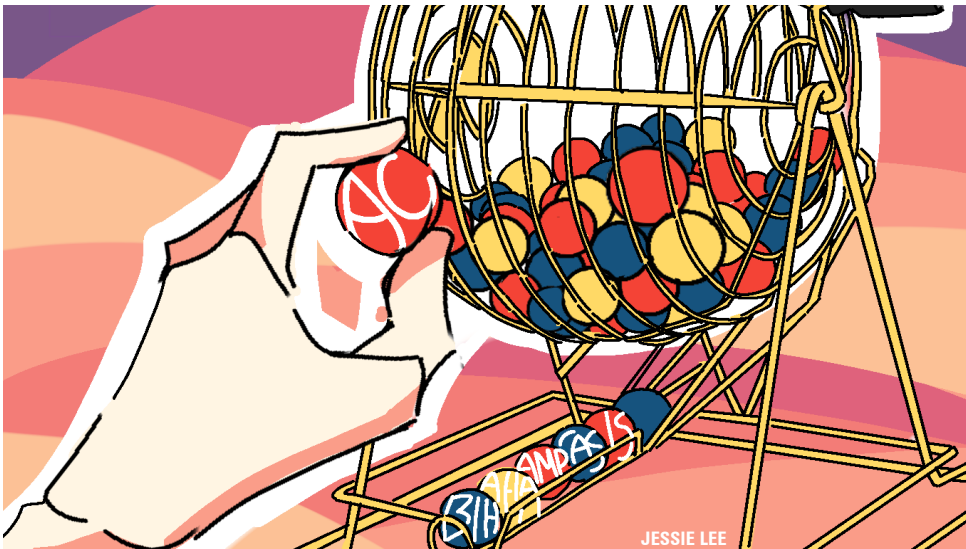
BHS students are first introduced to small schools in their first year, when freshmen enter the lottery process in the spring. During this time, counselors go to classes and inform students about different small schools. The students then rank their small school preferences in the spring.

There are multiple factors that go into a student’s

placement in a small school: their personal preference, geographical zone, and gender are all taken into consid-

eration. “It’s not random ... The algorithm accounts for student preference, zone, and gender, and then it creates

the best distribution of students of different genders and different zones,” Rok said.



Adena Ishii becomes first woman of color elected Berkeley Mayor

BY HAZEL LUTZKER
staff writer

On Wednesday, Nov. 20, 2024, the Alameda County Registrar of Voters announced Adena Ishii as the mayor elect for the City of Berkeley. Ishii will serve as mayor for four years and has the opportunity to be reelected in the next mayoral race in 2028. During her time as mayor, Ishii will lead City Council meetings and vote on all issues discussed, represent Berkeley in ceremonial matters, and influence priorities for the city to focus on over the next four years.

Ishii is the first woman of color and Asian American to be elected mayor of Berkeley. During her swearing in ceremony on Friday, Dec. 6, 2024, Ishii spoke on stereotypes against Asian women and how she hopes to challenge them as mayor.

“For too long, Asian women have been seen as meek and subservient, certainly not leadership material,” Ishii said as she was sworn in, “Taking this oath is one step closer towards breaking that stereotype

and showing young women and girls that they, too, can be leaders.”

Ishii has always been driven towards changing her community for the better, and this was no exception.

“This was a great opportunity to make a change in a lot of the issues that I really

“Key issues I’m prioritizing include housing and homelessness, public safety, and infrastructure.”

Adena Ishii
Berkeley Mayor

care about and to represent our community in a way that hasn’t been done before,” Ishii said. “I’m excited to continue serving my community.” Ishii previously served on the Berkeley Unified School District Reparations Task Force, held a seat on the City’s Sugar Sweetened Beverage Commission, and served as the youngest president ever of the Bay Area League of Women Voters.

Ishii wants to focus on building a relationship between City Council Members and aligning the city’s goals and priorities.

“I want to rebuild trust

between the City Council and the community. Key issues I’m prioritizing include housing and homelessness, public safety, and infrastructure,” Ishii said.

“I want Berkeley to continue being a pro-housing city, provide safe and accessible shelters for those experiencing homelessness, and expand mental health care support,” Ishii said, “For public safety, I want to invest in social services, mental health care, youth programming, and ensuring our police and fire departments have the tools they need.”

Ishii also emphasized the need to build new infrastructure for streets and sidewalks in Berkeley. Throughout her campaign, Ishii showed her dedication to implementing this infrastructure, such as being a strong proponent of Measure FF, which provides safety improvements when paving streets, and meeting with local housing and safe street advocates.

Ishii’s success with her campaign came as a surprise to many due to the fact that she had held no prior position on City Council or in any public

office, unlike any of the other candidates or many former mayors of Berkeley.

Ishii also hopes to foster greater connection between Berkeley’s government and BUSD during her term.

“One concern I heard during the campaign was a lack of direct communication between the city and BUSD. I want to create more opportunities for dialogue and engagement, but I also want to hear from students, teachers, and administrators about what they need from us,” Ishii said. She explained how she plans to do this: reaching out

to existing community groups, attending events, visiting classrooms, and ensuring that her office is approachable and accessible for students.

Ishii strongly encourages youth to get involved with local politics, as a reflection of her own early start in politics.

“Students can join city commissions, get involved in campaigns, attend meetings, and follow local issues,” Ishii said, “Politics is more accessible than people think, and there are many ways to connect your interests — whether it’s sports or public spaces — to civic engagement.”

She also would like to start an internship program for high school students to give opportunities for youth to get a feel for what leadership and service roles for the city like being the mayor entail.

As for her message to students at Berkeley High School, Ishii said, “I want them to know their vote matters. As someone who felt disenfranchised as a young person, I learned how much of an impact one person can have. Our campaign is proof of that — grassroots efforts and community support made it happen.”



One of Ishii’s goals is to strengthen the connection between BUSD and Berkeley’s government. ATTICUS LABANG

Alzheimer’s Services of the East Bay are to shut down Dec. 13

BY LUCY HOHN
staff writer

For 35 years, the Alzheimer’s Services of the East Bay (ASEB) has been providing Dementia and Alzheimer’s

patients with many beneficial services. Whether it be games, food, or puzzles, volunteers and staff have worked hard to better the patients’ lives. However, the services are ending on Friday, Dec. 13, 2024.

ASEB is a nonprofit that

gives much support to many different groups of people including patients and caregivers. It has been active since 1989, beginning with just 15 patients and growing to serve over 100 patients a day. On their website, they describe

core values as providing “a safe, caring, and stimulating environment for our participants, and a source of respite and information for caregivers.”

According to Berkeleyside, ASEB has been spending two thousand dollars a week to accommodate these expenses. If they had to continue paying the money they needed to, they would go into extreme debt. The failure to meet payroll recently, combined with all the money they have been paying, is what ultimately led to the ending of the clinic.

For many years the clinic has been of assistance to many. It has around 15 volunteers, who help with running activities, feeding patients, and interacting with them throughout the day. Lauren Bae, one of the volunteers said, “One of my fondest memories at ASEB would be during one of

our music activities ... One patient suggested ‘You Are My Sunshine’ and as the piano music started, the whole room began to sing along.”

Many volunteers have also grown from working with patients at ASEB. Sophia Tran, another volunteer, talked about a patient who is motivated to bring light and joy into her activities. She said, “As she shared her motivation, it soon became an inspiration, a reminder of my “why” in volunteering at ASEB, to encourage patients to explore what brings them light and simultaneous independence at this home away from home.”

ASEB provides many types of care, which makes it an option for many different people. They provide adult daycare services which is an inexpensive way to help a family member without putting them into full-time care. They

also provide caregiver services which are helpful for patients who wander and families who are concerned about a family member wandering. These make it a more affordable option for families who don’t want to put their relatives into full-time care. Additionally, ASEB provides support to caregivers and educates community members about dementia care.

“This organization provides a more financially friendly option for low-income families. Without it, I worry about the uncertainty both patients and ASEB employees will face after its closure,” Bae said.

Even with uncertainty, volunteers are still looking for ways to help the clinic. They have started a GoFundMe and there are many links on ASEB’s website for donations. With enough donations, volunteers hope to reopen ASEB.



A room where patients can relax and connect inside Alzheimer Services of the East Bay. EMORY ELY

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Students react to the reemergence of SAT & ACT for colleges

BY REUBEN WOLF
staff writer

Change is on the way regarding college applications for Berkeley High School juniors. Students will now be required to submit standardized test scores to popular universities such as Stanford, Cornell, Purdue, and Harvard along with tens of others starting next year. This is different from recent years, when most U. S. universities have been test optional.

In 2020, many colleges and universities stopped mandating the SAT and ACT in applications, largely due to the inability to administer tests during the COVID-19 pandemic. This led to students who had excellent grades and extracurriculars, but low standardized scores, to suddenly become more competitive at elite universities.

However, starting in the 2025-26 application process, many universities will be switching back to mandating SAT and ACT scores in applications. Stanford University announced that they made this change based on internal research, which found

that standardized tests are an important predictor for students' capabilities in college. However, some students express skepticism at this idea.

"A lot of people don't perform the way that they potentially can (on the SAT/ACT) by length of intellect, because of this, I don't think (the test is) an accurate measure of all people and what their capabilities are," BHS junior Julius Rosenbach said. This change will affect current high school juniors, like BHS junior Nevo Naftalin-Kelman, who pointed out that the switch back to mandating test scores will allow schools to filter out students easier. "They will no longer have to sift through thousands of essays, it narrows the field of how many people are being looked at," Naftalin-Kelman said.

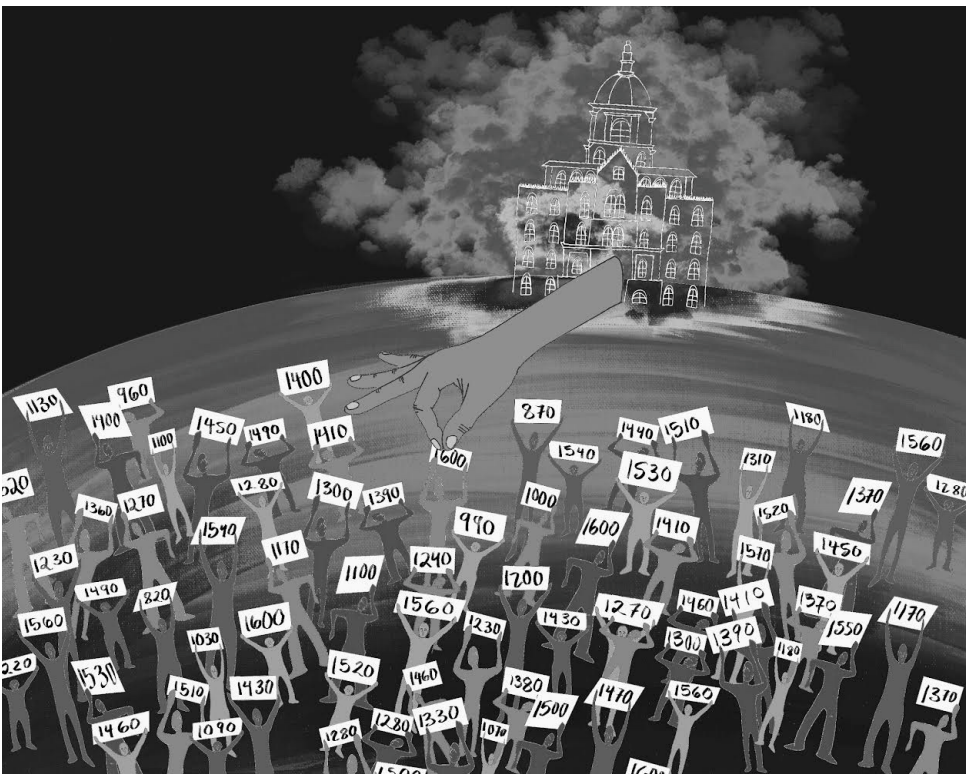
Naftalin-Kelman also mentioned that SATs and ACTs do not necessarily pick out the smartest students; instead, they identify the best test takers and the people most committed to studying. Even so, he recognized that there are no better options. "At this point, standardized tests are one of the best solutions, I don't know if there really is a solution that works,

because it's just so hard to measure people's academic ability with something simple, like (standardized tests)," Naftalin-Kelman said.

BHS junior Sarah Marsh believes that standardized tests should have little importance in the decision making process of college admissions. "I think that more important things are your essays or your extracurriculars. And I'd say even GPA is more important than SAT scores and ACT scores," Marsh said.

Despite students' personal perspectives, research suggests that standardized tests may be particularly important to predicting how students will perform in college. A study done by a group called Opportunity Insights found that at Ivy League schools, along with Duke, MIT, University of Chicago, and Stanford, success in college had little to no correlation with students' GPA. However, there was a strong correlation between collegiate success and standardized test scores. The University of California (UC) system conducted a similar experiment in 2020 and found similar results.

"Test scores have vastly



CARINA NOTTINGHAM

more predictive power than is commonly understood in the popular debate," John Friedman said, a professor of economics at Brown University, as reported in the New York Times.

Despite this, others still argue that standardized tests create equity issues that limit equal access to education. Alfredo Corrales (Mr. Freddy), a counselor in the CCC explained how students often

have to travel in order to take the SAT/ACT, a process that can involve paying for hotels, or car access, both of which are not resources available to all students. In addition, there is a \$68 fee to take the test itself, however this can be waived if the student is eligible.

Even though many schools have reinstated standardized tests, options remain for those who choose

not to take them. As noted in the Washington Post, as many as 80 percent of undergraduate institutions remain test optional. The UC system also remains test-blind. However, given the ever-changing landscape, BHS students, especially those who plan on applying to highly selective private schools, may need to budget for and develop a study plan to prepare for future testing mandates.

Financial Literacy for Minorities Club teaches personal finance



Johanna Sanchez (Left) with faculty advisor Nick Pleskac (Right).

TOSCANA GIRARD MAXON

BY KIMIA AZADPUR
staff writer

On Saturday, June 29, 2024, the State of California passed legislation requiring all high school students to complete at least one semester of personal finance as a graduation requirement. The legislation requires the course to be offered by the 2027-28 school year. In the meantime, though, Berkeley High School students are learning and sharing financial literacy information through a semester-long finance course, or through student-run financial literacy organizations. One such organization on campus is the Financial Literacy Club for Minorities Club.

Founded by BHS junior Johanna Sanchez, the Financial Literacy Club focuses on filling a gap for some students who lack financial knowledge by providing a space for students to learn about managing money and making informed financial decisions.

"Whether it's understanding how to use credit and debit cards, planning for a 401(k), or saving for college, there aren't enough safe spaces for these conversations," Sanchez said, "We want to create a safe and supportive environment where they can learn and thrive."

The club's first idea is to teach students the basics of financial management. Topics such as the use of

payment cards, checking accounts, and making deposits will help students understand how to manage their money. As the club progresses, Sanchez plans to introduce more advanced topics, including investments and historical context behind financial disparities, particularly among minority groups.

"We are focusing on the basics: understanding credit and debit cards, checking accounts, and deposits," Sanchez said, "As we grow, we plan to introduce more advanced topics like investments ... We'll explore how historical events and systemic issues continue to affect minorities, especially in areas such as business and investing."

For club members, this initiative provides a valuable opportunity to earn essential financial skills. Students believe the club will equip them with the knowledge to make informed financial decisions, both now and in the future.

"Finance ... (is) such an important life skill; learning how to handle debit, credit, and invest in stocks. A big motivator for me was my

mom. She wants to learn about this stuff too, but it's hard to figure it all out just by searching online. So this club gives me an opportunity to learn and also teach her what I've learned," Nico Schmidt, a BHS sophomore, said.

"If you learn the terms and concepts early, it's harder for people, like in real estate or other industries, to trick you into thinking something is a deal when it's not. You'll be able to understand if you can actually afford things, like a mortgage, and make better decisions," Mollie Fuller, a BHS freshman said.

Sanchez hopes to bring in guest speakers who can provide insights into financial success and discuss the challenges that minorities face in achieving financial

stability. "We want to discuss topics like Black Wall Street and the systemic barriers minorities face in achieving financial success," Sanchez said, "We plan to bring in outside resources,

"We'll explore how historical events and systemic issues continue to affect minorities, especially in areas such as business and investing."

Johanna Sanchez
BHS junior & Club Founder

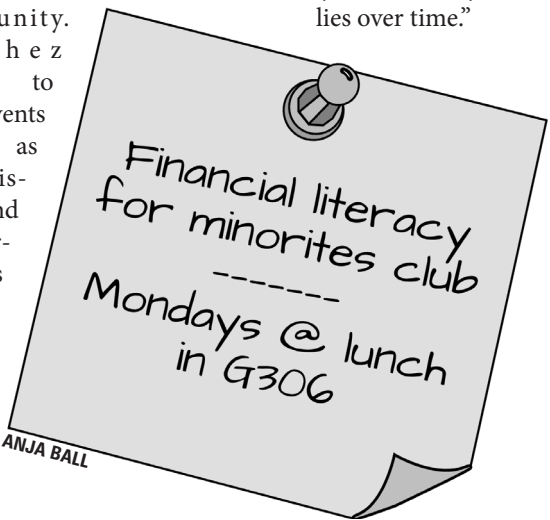
like lessons from Charles Schwab, to ensure credible and accessible information. We also want to have guest speakers when we need expert knowledge on specific topics."

The club's goals extend beyond education; it also seeks to make positive impacts on the community. Sanchez hopes to host events such as fundraisers and partnerships with non-

profit organizations to give back to those in need. One vision is raising scholarship funds to help students save for college and reduce debt.

"We want to host more events at BHS, like fundraisers and guest speaker sessions. We are also looking to give back to the community, potentially by supporting unhoused individuals or partnering with nonprof-

its to create a meaningful impact," Sanchez said, "One of our main goals is to fundraise for scholarships. This would help students save for college and reduce student debt, which is a major barrier for many families. By reducing that burden, we can help increase financial stability for minority families over time."

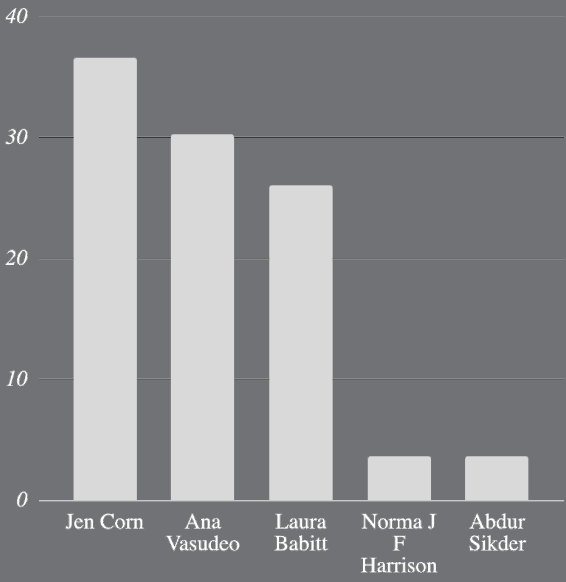




Jen Corn speaking at School Board Forum on Tuesday Oct. 8, 2024.



Berkeley School Board
Race Results:



Ana Vasudeo speaking at School Board Forum on Tuesday, Oct. 8, 2024



Meet the elected Berkeley Unified School
Board members, Jen Corn and Ana Vasudeo

BY HAZEL LUTZKER
staff writer

Jen Corn

Jen Corn, a former Berkeley Unified School District educator and administrator, is stepping into a new role as an elected member of the BUSD Board of Directors, bringing with her a wealth of experience, relationships, and a fresh perspective on the challenges and opportunities within the district.

“I know firsthand what it takes to train and support every teacher, and I’ll be able to offer good suggestions and ideas in a way that will be successful and have good outcomes for the district and for the kids,” Corn said.

Corn’s campaign was based on her principle values: equity, belonging, and stability.

“Equity, to me, is about focusing on core classroom instruction so that we’re accelerating students’ achievement for everyone, but most of all for students of color, students with disabilities, and students who are learning English,” Corn said, “Belonging is making sure that our schools are places that are LGBTQIA+ inclusive, anti-racist, affirming, and

welcoming communities. It’s also important that we have strong partnerships between schools and families.”

Her last value, stability, is ensuring that the district can hire and retain high quality admin, while staying within budgetary restraints. Corn expressed her hopes to do her best in serving as a helpful and progressive school board director in the years to come.

“I ended up buying pins and stickers, which are the high school equivalent of yard signs, to advertise to youth,” Corn explained. Elected in the first year after the approval of Vote 16, a bill that allows 16-year-olds to vote for school board members, Corn actively planned events and developed strategies to get the support of teenagers.

“I had the opportunity to connect with groups like Youth & Government and participate in a student-hosted candidate forum at Berkeley High (School), which was fantastic,” Corn said.

In her years before joining the school board, Corn was an educator in BUSD for over a decade. She

worked at Sylvia Mendez Elementary School, previously named LeConte, where she was a dual immersion teacher from 2005 to 2009. From 2009 to 2011, Corn worked as a literacy coach at Rosa Parks Elementary School. Later, she was an elementary school princi-

pal at Oxford Elementary School from 2011-13 and Thousand Oaks Elementary School from 2013-18. Currently, Corn is serving as the Director of School Improvement for the Oakland Unified School District. The Director of School Improvement is responsible for leading and overseeing the development and implementation of strategies to enhance student achievement across the school district.

According to Corn, her experience has given her an appreciation for the nuances involved in implementing policy, such as resource allocation and communication, which she believes is crucial for effective governance. Corn has set her sights on addressing Berkeley’s achievement gap. She has expressed her commitment to ensuring that the district hires quality teachers that make sure that the kids are learning to fit their specific needs.

“The key element that provides a good education for kids is having strong staff and teachers,” Corn said, “It’s important to prioritize compensation and benefits for teachers and staff because we have to recruit and retain good teachers.”

Believing that teachers are the foundation of the school district, Corn emphasizes prioritizing staff pay in budget decisions. “I love Berkeley. I love Berkeley kids and Berkeley schools and Berkeley teachers,” Corn said, “That’s why I decided to run for the school board.”

pal at Oxford Elementary School from 2011-13 and Thousand Oaks Elementary School from 2013-18. Currently, Corn is serving as the Director of School Improvement for the Oakland Unified School District. The Director of School Improvement is responsible for leading and overseeing the development and implementation of strategies to enhance student achievement across the school district.

Corn believes that her experience as a former teacher and administrator uniquely positions her to understand the needs of students and educators, which will help her give them the support they need.

Ana Vasudeo

Ana Vasudeo, a Berkeley Unified School District parent and community member, got re-elected to serve her second term as one of the BUSD Board of Directors, along with Jen Corn. Vasudeo was first elected in 2020.

During her previous term, Vasudeo advocated for results-oriented budgeting with data-driven evaluations to protect program quality amid budget cuts. She led the campaign for Measure H, securing funding that supports nearly 20 percent of the district’s budget. She also prioritized school safety by coordinating transportation efforts to ensure students arrive safely at school and establishing BUSD’s Safety Committee and advanced inclusivity through the Multilingual Learner Master Plan and resolutions supporting LGBTQIA+, Latinx, and AAPI students. She resolved teacher parking issues at BHS, avoiding the construction of a \$28

million parking structure, and collaborated to improve parking for educators. She also championed Special Education by leading the investment for data systems to evaluate and monitor student success, sponsoring Disability Awareness Month, and creating a Disability Equity Advisory Committee.

With the Vote 16 initiative, Vasudeo used new outreach efforts to reach youth.

“We had student canvassers out almost every weekend talking to voters about

due to decreasing student enrollment and increasing costs, creating an estimated deficit of eight million dollars for the 2024-25 school year. These financial challenges can lead to reduction in staff, cuts from programs, and larger class sizes, impacting the quality of district-wide education.

“I do feel the need to focus more on our district’s budget as we prepare for upcoming budget cuts at the state and local level,” Vasudeo said. Some ways she plans to achieve this are

ensuring fiscal transparency and accountability by working closely with district committees and stakeholders to prioritize spending and complete a strategic plan to guide decisions, closing the opportunity gap. “I will work closely with our Ed services staff to push for us to properly evaluate programs which serve our Black and Brown students and our students with disabilities,” Vasudeo said, “During my second term, I would like to focus on uplifting the needs of our special education students and their families.”

Vasudeo also plans to continue to work with the

community, especially high school students, to secure safety funding, establish a BUSD Safety Committee, and create a district-wide Safety Coordinator position. “At the end of the day, I am serving to ensure that we are offering the students the best educational opportunities for your future and I’d love to be able to uplift student voices in these important budgeting decisions,” Vasudeo said.

Finally, she wishes to continue being a champion for Safe Routes to School. “As a transportation planner, I will fight to ensure that our students and staff can get to school safely and sustainably,” Vasudeo said. In the past, she worked with Safe Routes to School’s collaborators to support pedestrian and bicycle safety near school sites.

Vasudeo expressed how she sees her role on the board as more than just an elected position — it’s a privilege and responsibility she deeply values.

“It’s an honor for me to serve you not only as your Berkeley School Board director but as a member of the California Latino School Boards Association,” Vasudeo said, “Every one of you (BHS students) inspires me to serve on the school board.”

“At the end of the day, I am serving to ensure that we are offering the students the best educational opportunities for your future ...”

Ana Vasudeo
BUSD School Board Member

my candidacy,” Vasudeo said, “I also worked closely with my youth commissioner and other BHS students to get out the vote for the school board race.” She explained how the changes to the voting system pushed her to interact more with the BHS community, and how she enjoyed getting involved with students.

BUSD is currently facing significant budget cuts

due to decreasing student enrollment and increasing costs, creating an estimated deficit of eight million dollars for the 2024-25 school year. These financial challenges can lead to reduction in staff, cuts from programs, and larger class sizes, impacting the quality of district-wide education.

BERKELEY HIGH JACKET

OPINION

OPINION EDITORS: ADITYA SRIDHARAN & OHAD AVIRAN-FINKELSTEIN

ADITYASRIDHARAN@STUDENTS.BERKELEY.NET

Late night shows: Comedy vs credibility

BY HAILEY OSTRER
staff writer

Whether it be "Saturday Night Live" or "The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon," late-night talks shows are staples of American television that have been around since the 1950s. They have been known for their funny celebrity interviews, parody skits, and humorous reporting on the news. While late night talk shows should not be a viewer's only source of news, their credibility, jokes, and relaxed nature make them a strong alternative to social media.

Talk shows weren't al-

ways news-related. Only since the arrival of the 2000s did comedians begin reading through the news headlines — making fun of leaders and throwing in jokes as they went. This was never intended to become a way for people to get their news, only a playful spin on the news itself. However, as talk shows became more political, fact-checking became necessary before they aired. According to the magazine "The Vulture," "The Daily Show's" producers believe that jokes with credibility behind them are more meaningful to audiences.

In the past decade, viewership of late-night talk

shows has decreased dramatically. Ten years ago, programs such as NBC's "The Tonight Show," ABC's "Jimmy Kimmel Live!," and Comedy Central's "The Daily Show" collectively averaged around 10.5 million views each night. Today, however, they pull in less than half of that figure, at 4.5 million views per night. This shift is largely because more and more people get their news and entertainment from a more addictive medium: social media. According to a study by the Pew Research Center, 20 percent of Americans get their news from "news influencers." However, these sources are often tainted with misinformation. A study by Security.org found that more than half of social media users who share news or political posts do so without fact checking.

20 percent of Americans
get their news from "news
influencers."

Pew Research Center

sources — they are useful in their own right. By providing audiences with relaxed and humorous information, they draw from social media's focus on entertainment without spreading falsehoods. It's important to remember that these long-standing talk shows have a team of qualified people behind them. Nevertheless, audiences must be aware that late-night

shows offer the host's opinion on the news and are not purely informational. If audiences consume media to confirm their existing views (confirmation bias), current events will only continue to become more and more polarized.

Whether it be social media or late-night shows, news should always be taken with a grain of salt. Late-night shows, while decreasing in popularity, provide the opportunity for a good laugh and a dose of current events, while mitigating misinformation. Ultimately, viewers should get their news from a variety of sources instead of solely consuming information from one medium.



CREATIVE COMMONS LICENSE

Math should be choose your own adventure

BY ZOE WHITMAN
staff writer

Integrated math is both loved and detested at Berkeley High School. Some kids enjoy the variety of topics covered, while others feel held back. Integrated math is a program where instead of learning one math skill, such as geometry, per year, you learn multiple branches of math throughout a single year. While integrated math can be helpful to some, it is only one option in a long line. There are also many benefits to allowing students to specialize in a different branch of math each year.

One benefit of non-integrated math is that it allows students to focus on branches of math that either especially interest them or are relevant to their future career paths. For example, students could take algebra, often considered a very useful skill for everyday life, and not geometry which may be less useful day to day. If concepts were taught

separately, students interested in pursuing physics or engineering in college could prioritize precalculus, while other students could take a more relevant math class to their future careers.

Vivian Lien, a junior at College Preparatory School enjoys her integrated math classes. Coming from a middle school where they also taught integrated math, Lien considers it a smoother transition into more advanced classes. While this is great, for students coming from middle schools without integrated math programs, this could prove to be more of a hardship for students who had non-integrated math programs in middle school.

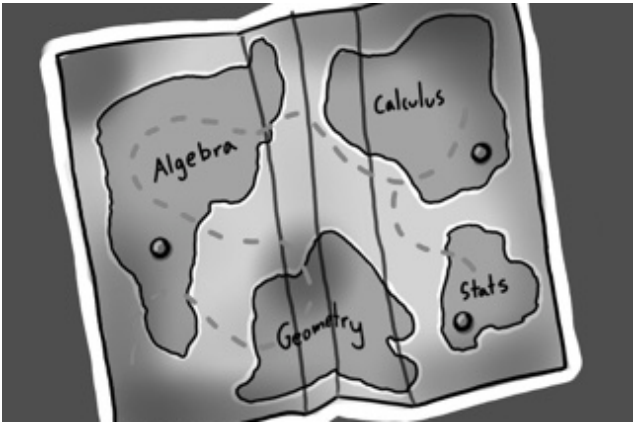
Alexandra Jameson, a BHS junior, has taken advanced math classes throughout high school. "I think (integrated math) helped me be a better problem-solver and work on my ability to think in several ways while combining topics to find a solution," Jameson said. This idea is echoed by a study published

in The Journal for Research in Mathematics Education which found that on standardized tests students studying an integrated math curriculum outperformed those who do not.

However, one additional issue with integrated math is its transferability. This can pose a challenge for students who transfer to or from schools with a non-integrated math curriculum. The two structures often conflict, creating difficulties for students. For example, a BHS student may have already covered most of the material in a particular math branch, such as geometry,

but not all of it. However, if they transfer to a school that requires students to complete geometry before precalculus, they might need to retake the entire year of geometry, despite already covering most of it.

Overall, integrated math classes help students integrate their knowledge and grow problem-solving skills. However, a major drawback is that students have very little choice in what they learn. With more choice, integrated math doesn't have to be lost — it could simply be another option alongside a more specialized alternative.



KAELO HICKMAN

THE WONDERS OF SHARKS: JAWS

ALEX SOKULSKY



While the movie "Jaws" seemed like a harmless and fun film at the time of its release, it has been one of the greatest factors that has led to mass shark hunting all over the world. In the movie, after a shark attacks on a beach in New England, the mayor posts a reward to anyone who kills the 25 foot great white. The movie depicts the thrilling chase of hunting and catching this bloodthirsty monster shark.

Based on a book written by Peter Benchley, the movie was mostly filmed by two Australians, Valerie and Ron Taylor. When making the movie, everyone involved thought that it would be a great fictional story. At the time, the Taylors were at the head of shark research and learning. Both started out as spear fishers, and then decided the oceans were too beautiful and the animals too special to kill for sport. Little was known about sharks at this time. They existed, but nobody thought to learn anything about them because they were believed to be too dangerous. It was crazy to think someone would purposefully get in the water to swim with them. Both Taylors lived in a time where the oceans were so full, anybody could take anything they wanted and it would "never make a difference."

However, their story and movie had the opposite effect of what they hoped. After the movie was released it gained popularity extremely quickly and was soon one of the most popular films ever seen. After viewing it, instead of moving on with their lives, people decided that all sharks were like the fictional one in the movie. A new sport was invented; killing sharks became the most heroic thing that a person could do, and it instilled a lot of fear in the population. There were many people who became too scared to go near water at all, let alone the ocean. It seemed like the best thing for people to do to ensure everyone's safety was to kill every shark in the ocean.

Valerie and Ron Taylor have spent the rest of their lives trying to undo the unintended consequence of the film. From going on talk shows, to sharing photography and videos of what real sharks are like, they did everything they could to prove that sharks are not the monsters the movie made them out to be. Valerie sent many letters, and succeeded in getting the grey nurse shark protected. In the same place in southern Australia where "Jaws" was filmed, there is now a marine reserve specifically to protect the sharks that were once abundant there.

Though it may seem ridiculous that a shark lover and conservationist would think to make a movie like "Jaws," the damage caused was unforeseeable. While Ron Taylor has passed away, but Valerie, now 89 years old, is still writing letters, advocating for sharks and diving anytime she can. While the movie harmed shark conservation at the time, it was the spark for one of the world's great marine science leaders.

Attending overseas universities broadens horizons and futures

BY REECE FONG
staff writer

From experiencing different cultures to learning new languages, studying abroad has tons of benefits that can influence the rest of your life. The current political situation amidst the recent election can also dissuade students from attending university within the United States. Studying abroad is also a great way to participate in different forms of government and politics in other countries. Additionally, studying abroad can even be cheaper and more cost-efficient than attending in-state colleges. Overall, going to university abroad is an amazing opportunity that all students should consider, because of the personal and academic growth it offers, as well as the chance to gain a wider global perspective and open doors to future career opportunities.

One of the most compelling reasons to study abroad is the opportunity to experience a unique and diverse culture firsthand. Students can visit regions of the world they wish to explore, engage in culinary experiences that intrigue them, and immerse themselves in the cultural and societal practices of the country they're in. "I want to apply to college internationally because of the diverse, rich experiences to be gained in foreign

countries. Attending college internationally seems like a great way to broaden my horizons by exiting my comfort zone and meeting new people," Michael Banks, a BHS sophomore, said. Many high school students across the country have similar ideas. According to a 2023 Terra Dotta survey, 57 percent of high school students in the U.S. expressed a strong interest in studying abroad.

For young adults, the cost of higher education is often a critical factor when choosing a university. The rising tuition rates at American colleges have pushed many students to look abroad, where options can be surprisingly affordable. Many international universities offer low-cost or even tuition-free programs, along with more affordable off-campus housing options.

With low-cost programs and off-campus housing, students can find that studying abroad is much cheaper than attending an American university. "Cost is a big factor in where I want to go to college. If attending college internationally is cheaper, I'm all for it. Expensive tuition can make students accrue debt, and going into a lot of debt can really set you back for the future," Banks said. In a 2013 American Student Association (ASA) report, 30 percent of those surveyed said that their student debt was the decid-

ing factor in their career choices. By choosing to study abroad, students may be able to avoid this financial burden entirely.

Furthermore, studying abroad can be a way to experience a new forms of government and politics. For students who are discontented or fearful of the new U.S. leadership, studying abroad is a wonderful option to escape life under the law of a politician they dislike. Experiencing large differences in politics can broaden a student's view of the world, and expose them to different forms of governance, social structures, and ideologies, creating a better understanding of global issues, and encouraging critical thinking about their own political beliefs and values.

Some may argue that studying abroad creates safety concerns or discomfort for students, especially when a student doesn't speak the national language of the country while others may point to common problems such as student's health insurance not extending to the country in which they are residing. Nevertheless, these common problems often have simple solutions. There are many health insurance plans for countries where students might study, that work just as well as U.S. insurance plans and

are often cheaper or even sponsored by the university. Some might claim that international college is too big of a commitment for a high school student. That being said, studying abroad is a choice that all students have. If students are uncomfortable throwing themselves out into a space where they might not know the language or customs, they do not have to apply. However, if a student is interested in exiting their comfort zone and trying new things, they should be encouraged to look into studying abroad. Additionally, if students don't want to commit to studying abroad for all four years of college, many universities across the country offer study abroad programs in which students can live at a partner university's campus.

Ultimately, studying abroad offers valuable experiences that can heavily impact a student's personal, academic, and professional lives. It allows students to immerse themselves in different cultures, learn new languages, and explore global politics. With potential financial benefits and the chance to broaden one's world view, studying abroad is a powerful experience for young adults looking to travel to new places. Because of this, more high school students should be encouraged to consider this transformative opportunity and choose to study abroad for their studies after high school.



EDITORIAL

Adena Ishii elected mayor – a sign of hope for Berkeley

This past election, Berkeley voters elected Adena Ishii to serve as mayor, who was officially sworn in on Friday Dec. 6, 2024. Ishii, the City of Berkeley’s first mayor who’s a woman of color not only accomplished an important and long overdue milestone but has also pledged to enact progressive and effective policy to address issues in affordable housing, education, and support for the unhoused Berkeley community. Ishii, who has said she has personally faced housing insecurity, has expressed pro-housing stances encouraging the construction of more affordable housing in Berkeley. According to the Daily Californian, Ishii proposes revisions to “exclusionary rules around land use.” Such revisions would decrease the barriers to building affordable housing. In 2018, Ishii was instrumental in passing Measure O, which helped increase affordable housing in Berkeley, and Measure P, which provided funding for homeless services. For a city

that prides itself on progressive values, it is essential to have a leader who understands that increasing affordable housing is key to equitably addressing the housing crisis. We encourage Ishii to maintain her pro-housing stances as she serves as mayor. Ishii also brings relevant political experience to the mayoral position: She is the youngest and first woman of color elected President of the League of Women Voters Albany Emeryville Berkeley and serves as the co-chair of the Berkeley Unified School District Reparations Task Force, which is involved in proposing and implementing reparations to students with enslaved ancestors in the United States. She was appointed by former Mayor Tom Bates and former Mayor Jesse Arreguin to serve on the Sugar-Sweetened Beverage Product Panel of Experts Commission. Perhaps more notably, she also brings the valuable perspective of a political outsider and a newcomer to Berkeley City Hall. Unlike the second and third-place mayoral candidates, Sophie Hahn and Kate Harrison, Ishii has never served on the Berkeley City Council. Ishii previously told the SF Chronicle that she decided to run for mayor because city hall needed a reset, and she expressed interest in “moving forward from a toxic and broken past.” “When we’re talking about ‘resetting,’ that’s what we’re talking about,” Ishii said in a Berkeleyside article after she had won the election, “Less of a change of direction, generally, but more how we work with each other and how we interact with the constituents and the people who live here.” Ishii emphasizes non-partisan politics and common-sense

solutions, both of which could benefit Berkeley politics. Berkeley citizens deserve a leader who prioritizes solving issues within our community, not one who indulges in personal drama. Ishii has also shown dedication to Berkeley schools, not only through serving as co-chair of the Reparations Task Force. In her interview with the Berkeley High Jacket, Ishii said she wanted to increase communication between the city and BUSD and to hear directly from teachers, students, and administrators about what support they need from the city. For Ishii, gaining feedback means reaching out to community groups, attending events, visiting classrooms, and ensuring students can contact her office. Ishii also suggested providing high school students with internship opportunities through the mayor’s office, demonstrating thought-out plans to assist BUSD students in their education. Ishii’s own educational journey has its roots in Berkeley – she attended both Berkeley City College (BCC) and University of California, Berkeley, offering an understanding of the Berkeley education system and opportunities. At BCC, she advocated against educational budget cuts. We hope Ishii will continue this pattern of supporting the educational systems in Berkeley by advocating for fair teacher pay, adequate mental health resources, and sufficient, well-managed school funding. In the wake of a general election that revealed a nationwide shift to the right, addressing issues of equity, safety, and housing on a local level is becoming increasingly important to combat this regression in federal policy. We are hopeful that Ishii can be the right person for this.

BERKELEY HIGH JACKET

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SCIENCE SPOTLIGHT

Caution! The looming energy drink epidemic must be avoided

BY KARIM MELEIS
staff writer

A public health nightmare is looming over Berkeley High School: energy drinks. Filled with caffeine and other stimulants, energy drinks are designed to increase the “energy” of the person drinking them. The old adage, “if it’s too good to be true, it probably is,” holds correct regarding energy drinks. Despite what some energy drink companies might market, these drinks come with some pretty bad side effects. It is vital that the usage of energy drinks should not be normalized, and BHS must institute programs to educate students about the dangers of energy drinks. Energy drinks are one way to stay up late, but they are not without risks. According to the Cleveland Clinic, drinking energy drinks like Monster and Red Bull will increase your risk of anxiety, depression, diarrhea, hallucinations, nausea,

tooth decay, and stroke. It may be hard to believe, but rarely, ingesting an energy drink can cause a condition known as reversible cerebral vasoconstriction syndrome (RCVS), which can restrict blood flow to the brain or cause a hemorrhage. In addition, according to an article from University of California Davis Health, the combination of energy drink’s high caffeine content and the presence of various stimulants increases users’ risk of heart disease. Nevertheless, BHS students still consume energy drinks. Many high school students still want to be able to feel more awake in order to be able to more easily complete all of their homework and/or participate in athletic activities, which often last very late. Understandably, many would turn to the readily available option of energy drinks to solve the problem of sleepiness. Nevertheless, students who want to stay healthy should avoid them. Fortunately, there are much better options than energy

drinks. For example, according to the Cleveland Clinic, drinking a sufficient amount of water (48 to 64 ounces per day), eating well-balanced meals, and staying active will help you to be more wakeful. If students must use stimulants, tea or coffee is preferable to energy drinks. While they also contain caffeine, they do not contain the other harmful chemicals found in energy drinks. Energy drinks are dangerous. Their prevalence should be considered an extremely high-priority public health issue, both at BHS and nationwide. In order to ensure the safety of BHS students from these harmful drinks, BHS must create a program to inform students about the harmful effects of energy drinks and the alternatives to them. This program could be integrated into the existing Ethnic Studies curriculum about drug use and sexual health. We must stop energy drinks from ruining the health of BHS students!



A student sips a Celsius energy drink. LILA HALLWARD

INVESTIGATIVE

INVESTIGATIVE EDITORS: SYDNEY LEHRER & PENELOPE PURCHASE

SYDNEYLEHRER@STUDENTS.BERKELEY.NET

The evolution of the small school system: 30 years later

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

When a student selects their small schools, they are placed into a lottery with other people in their geographic region, according to Keldon Clegg, BHS vice principal and Academic Choice (AC) supervisor. Within someone's region, Clegg said, "it's kind of like a certain number of seats are available."

The current selection process works in this way, in part, to increase diversity within the schools. However, it's not without its controversies.

"This goal of diversifying the schools, I don't understand its merit. I've never really understood why that's important," Tobias said, "What's important to me is increasing the outcomes to historically marginalized groups in our community, which is Black and Latino students. They are disproportionate in their numbers in (AMPS), and that's a great thing. They want to learn together. And that's what we provide."

Rok explained that the selection process isn't randomized because "the school district and the school board has a commitment to maintaining the same level of diversity that we have in our school overall."

However, the small school selection process has undergone changes over the years. When small schools were first created, the lottery process would start in eighth grade, so that students would already be in small schools upon their arrival at BHS. Now, eighth graders are placed in the Universal Ninth grade (U9) and into one of seven hives, where approximately 120 students share core classes with four teachers. At the end of their freshman year, they enter the lottery to be placed in small schools.

One of the reasons why the U9 was created was to shift the results of the small school lottery, Clegg explained. This was because of a study by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC), an accrediting association that evaluates improvement in schools.

When WASC visited BHS in the 2011 to 2012 school year, before U9 was established, one of their main concerns was diversity within the small schools. Its official report from the visit states: "The demographics of the entire student population need to be mirrored in each SLC in an equitable manner." It suggested that the district review the lottery system to change this.

This corroborates BHS's official 2014 to 2015 self-study report as

well, as it found a disparity between races in different small schools. The biggest demographic differences could be found between AMPS and Berkeley International High School (BIHS). Demographics in AMPS showed it was 40 percent African American, 35 percent Hispanic, and 13 percent white, whereas BIHS was 14 percent African American, 19 percent Hispanic, and 45 percent white. At the time, these demographics for the whole school showed it was 20 percent African American, 22 percent Hispanic, and 38 percent white.

Data from the 2024-25 school year, shared with The Jacket from BHS administration, showed that BIHS is 5 percent African American, 14.8 percent Hispanic, and 52.7 percent white. This makes BIHS the small school with the highest percentage of white students

separate (himself) from getting into (BIHS)," though he recalls being told that he only had to rank BIHS and AC.

"I felt it was a little ridiculous, frankly, that I got my fifth choice," Lacey said, "And especially when AC is the one that's easy to get into." He intended to try to switch out of BIHS as quickly as he could.

But as his sophomore year went on, Lacey began to feel like his initial unhappiness with his placement may have been overblown. "Now I've been for (BIHS) for two years. It just kind of feels like normal school, honestly," he said.

"It was kind of ignorance on my part. I thought there was much less choice (in BIHS) than there actually was," Lacey said, "If I were to re-rank them, I (would) probably put it even first or maybe even second."

Lacey now finds the whole situation "ironically funny," but he still thinks that his placement in BIHS was not fair. When he was first placed in BIHS, he suspected it was to "increase diversity," a belief he still mildly holds today. "When they were advertising the small schools, they talked about, there's a lot of white people in (BIHS) and they're trying to work to increase diversity," Lacey said, "And it made me think was there that element where I just kind of got put there to increase diversity?"

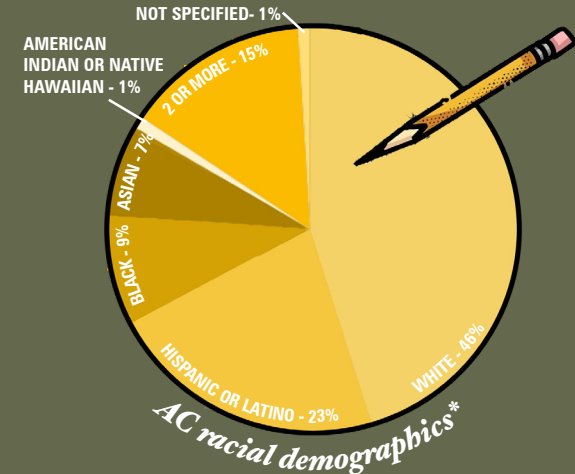
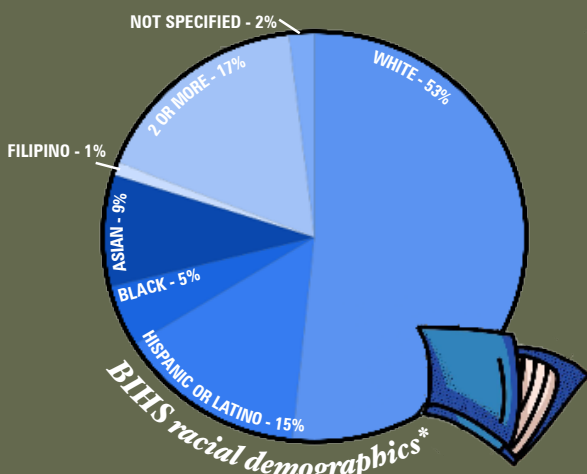
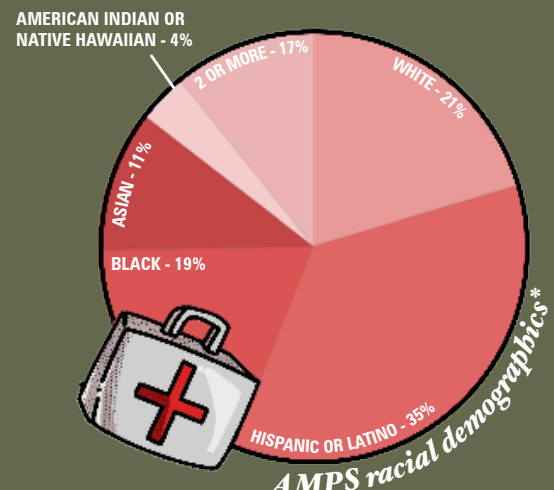
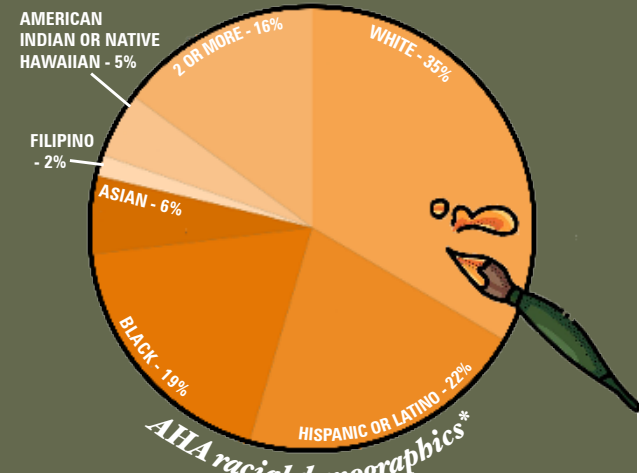
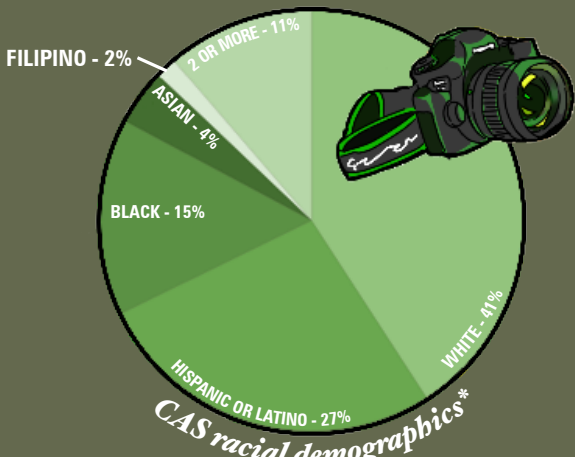
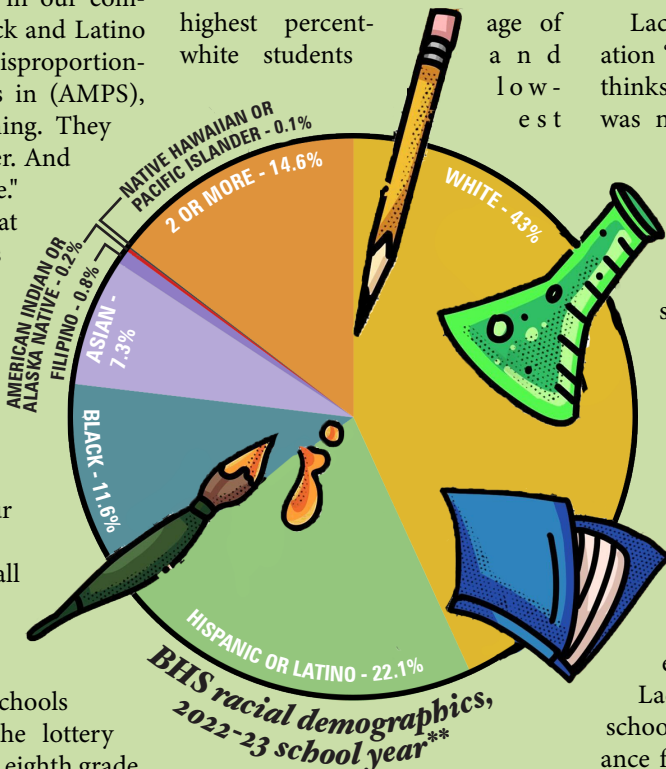
"I think what they did was kind of messed up, even if I'm not upset about it," Lacey said.

Although the small school lottery doesn't directly balance for race in the selection process, the algorithm does account for the geographic area of students, which can be implicitly connected to race.

As of right now, Tobias said, he believes that the small school system is "the best that (BHS) can do." When promoted correctly so students understand the ranking process and can make well-informed choices about schools they truly want to enter, it's effective, Tobias explained. He continued, "There's many students that don't want to be in one of the three academies, and there are students who don't want to be in AC or BIHS. It seems like if students are fully informed, they can, at the very least, get that to work for them."

Clegg explained that there's always room for improvement in the system. "I just hope folks know (that) we're constantly tinkering (with it)," Clegg said.

Note: This article has been shortened for print. Find the full version at our website, berkeleyhighjacket.com



*Source: BHS administration. Refers to 2024-25 school year.
**Note: The overall BHS demographics refer to students who identify as 'Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander' and students who identify as 'Alaskan Native or American Indian' as being in two distinct groups, whereas small school demographic data does not mention Alaskan Native or Pacific Islander identities.

FEATURES

FEATURES EDITORS: VIOLET MILLER-BRADY AND CARINA THOMAS

VIOLETMILLERBRADY@STUDENTS.BERKELEY.NET

Grandma’s kitchen: BHS students recreate holiday delights

BY DAMON HUNT
staff writer

BULGARIAN BANITSA

While many American families enjoy traditional Thanksgiving desserts such as apple, pecan, and pumpkin pie, Berkeley High School junior Oleg Mironov’s family, and other Bulgarian families across the country, make a very old recipe called Banitsa. Banitsa is a pastry made with filo dough, filled with many decadent fillings including various meats, cheeses, eggs, and fruit. Mironov’s family frequently makes the dish filled only with feta cheese. “It reminds me of childhood. It also just tastes really, (really) good ... it’s just a comfort food,” Mironov said.

Banitsa holds great Bulgarian cultural significance because it is often served at important events like New Year’s and other celebrations. The dish dates back to the 1500s in Bulgaria and has been a very popular dish throughout the country since it’s creation. Mironov’s family has been making this dish for three generations now, starting with his grandmother. “We have this really handwritten notebook that was my grandma’s. We had used a bunch of Bulgarian recipes from there, including Banitsa,” Mironov said.

INGREDIENTS

- » Filo dough
- » Butter
- » Feta cheese
- » Large eggs
- » Milk
- » Salt

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 350*
2. Mix the salt, cheese, eggs, and milk together until homogenized in a bowl
3. Make five layers of filo dough and butter
4. Pour wet ingredients onto the dough until it is covered, repeat the process until the baking dish is full
5. Bake for 35 minutes, let rest and enjoy

AMERICAN SWEET POTATO PIE

Rashawd Lane-Jones is a junior at BHS who identifies as African American. His family’s signature holiday dish is sweet potato pie, although according to Lane-Jones, they enjoy it year round. Lane-Jones’ great-grandmother created the recipe herself, and passed it onto his grandmother, his mother, and now him. He loves the dish because it brings his family together and of course because of its fantastic taste.

Lane-Jones’ grandmother makes it by peeling, mashing, and pureeing sweet potatoes, followed by mixing in a variety of spices. She uses a lot of nutmeg, cinnamon, and sugar to enhance the flavor of the pie. The smooth paste is then refrigerated until fully chilled prior to being scooped into pie crust and baked.

INGREDIENTS

- » Pie Crust
- » Sweet potatoes
- » Nutmeg
- » Cinnamon
- » Sugar

INSTRUCTIONS.

1. Wash, peel, remove strings, and mash sweet potatoes until they are smooth
2. Mix in nutmeg, sugar, cinnamon, and spices of your liking
3. Chill the paste until it is more solid
4. Put the paste inside the pie crust and bake until crust is golden brown, serve after mild cooling and enjoy with whipped cream or marshmallows on top

EL SALVADORIAN PUPUSAS

BHS freshman Luca Macquart and his family celebrate the holidays, particularly Christmas, with warm, crunchy flatbread called Pupusas. This dish is a delightful culinary commonplace in El Salvadorian households like Macquart’s, and is also served as a street food. Pupusas are made across Latin America, but they are mostly found in El Salvador.

Macquart stresses the importance of authentic masa and fresh ingredients. His grandmother introduced it as a family recipe, and they continue to make the dish very traditionally, forming the tortillas by hand and cooking everything from scratch. The dish can be best described as a thick, crispy, and cheesy flatbread. According to Macquart, his family usually fills pupusas with beans and cheese, but all types of meats can also be added. The dish is often topped with a red sauce, served alongside other holiday dishes.

INGREDIENTS

- » Traditional El-Salvadoran red sauce

HOMEMADE TORTILLAS:

- » Masa flour
- » Water

FILLING:

- » Cheese of your choice
- » Mashed beans
- » Meat of your choice

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Mix the masa flour with water until a dough is formed and press it down with a tortilla press or your hands
2. Once the tortilla is flat, fill with beans, cheese, and meat
3. Fry until golden brown or crispy
4. Serve with red sauce and enjoy

POLISH PIEROGI DUMPLING SOUP

Jarvis Jirsa is a BHS junior who celebrates Christmas with a traditional Polish holiday dish called Pierogi soup. Polish families often make the dish around the holidays, but also as a casual “pick me up” for dinner. Jirsa’s family typically fills the dumplings with cottage cheese and eggs, and makes the soup with a comforting beef broth base and other herbs. The dish is often accompanied with beef and carrots in the broth. Jirsa enjoys the dish because it fosters connection. “I really feel like it’s the time that everyone can come together and be friends,” Jirsa said.

Similar to Mironov, this family recipe began with his grandmother. According to Jirsa, the original recipe was created when a Polish mother was experimenting in the kitchen. Jirsa encouraged everyone to try the dish at least once, and claimed it is his favorite Polish holiday dish for many reasons. “It’s good, and it’s with family, and because it tastes f---ing incredible,” Jirsa said.

INGREDIENTS

DOUGH:

- » Eggs
- » Flour

FILLING:

- » Cottage cheese
- » Eggs
- » Salt & Pepper

BROTH:

- » Beef stock
- » Herbs and Spices
- » Carrots
- » Water
- » Salt

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Simmer beef stock and spices for a few hours on low heat
2. Mix the eggs, flour, salt, and water together until a dough is formed
3. Roll out and the dough and shape into squares
4. Fill squares with cottage cheese, a couple eggs, salt, and pepper

MORE THAN TOAST:
DIM SUM
ADVENTURES

HAZEL BAILEH KLEIN WOLFF



Happy Friday, Jackets! Today I want to share with you some of the best dim sum joints in the Bay Area for a family dinner, a date with a best friend, or a quick bite. None of these places are expensive and the portion sizes are large enough to feed two people. So eat up, Jackets! I hope you all have some wonderful meals over our winter break.

Peony Seafood Restaurant, Oakland: I have been going to Peony Seafood since I was a little kid and I can happily say the food has always been delicious. Peony is in a mall in Oakland Chinatown with a huge dining room and tables for the whole family. Everything is served family style, so order to share. Peony offers an extensive dim sum menu for lunch, with some plates available on the dinner menu as well. The head chef trained in Hong Kong, providing contemporary and creative Chinese dishes. Some of my favorite dishes are the pea shoot dumplings, shu mai, custard egg buns, coconut pudding bunnies, and curated custard tofu.

Dragon Beaux, SF: Dragon Beaux resides out in the Richmond of SF, and from the outside it may be overlooked. But on the inside is a decorated and grand restaurant serving fresh and delectable dim sum. Everything is served family style with large portions. Dragon Beaux offers a “refined culinary experience” with a wide range of dim sum and modern Chinese dishes. The best dishes here are the soup dumplings with colored skins, yolk lava bao, taro buns, shrimp rice crepe roll, and seafood HK crispy noodles.

Dumpling Home, SF: Dumpling Home has been widely regarded as one of the best new dim sum restaurants in the Bay, as well as receiving a recommendation from the Michelin Guide. Dumpling Home is not a traditional Chinese, nor dim sum, restaurant, specializing in their dumplings. Dumpling Home is a casual restaurant, but it is usually very busy and does not accept reservations, so I recommend arriving early. The best dishes here are the crab and pork xiao long bao, green onion pancake, shrimp egg chives and wood ear mushroom dumpling, and house special bean paste noodles. Be patient with the staff, and ask for the chili sauce.

Da Lian, Berkeley: Da Lian is my favorite Chinese restaurant in Berkeley, and another childhood favorite of mine. I may be biased, but for good reason. While Da Lian might not look that busy, I would like to bring attention to this restaurant and encourage people to go eat there. Da Lian serves traditional Chinese dishes and incredible dim sum. They have all the dishes you could want at a Chinese restaurant, and the food always arrives hot and fresh. My favorite dishes are the spinach dumplings (I always order at least two), the honey walnut shrimp, zha jiang noodles, sizzling rice soup, and cabbage rolls.

Student-made nonprofits strive to make genuine impact in Berkeley community

BY KESL HUMPHREYS
staff writer

Participating in community service can feel extremely rewarding and make a difference in the lives of others. Some high school students, seeing the problems around them, set it upon themselves to help their community by contributing to a nonprofit organization. Through hard work and dedication, being part of a nonprofit organization can bring many benefits.

“It’s especially fulfilling to know that my efforts are making a difference,” Uma Shekhang said.

Shekhang is sophomore at Berkeley High School, and a chapter president for the nonprofit organization, Students for a Free Tibet. The organization is focused on advocating and raising awareness of injustices taking place in Tibet. “Tibetan students are being sent to boarding schools, away from their families and forced to speak Mandarin as their primary language,” Shekhang said, “My motivation for helping Students for a Free Tibet comes from a deep desire to preserve Tibetan culture and stand against the forced assimilation taking place in Tibet.”

As chapter president, Shekhang organizes weekly meetings at BHS, as well as attends monthly meetings for the entire international organization to discuss different topics related to advocating for Tibet. An important aspect of her role is keeping up to date on all the current news surrounding Tibet, in order to be prepared to speak out and guide others. “Being part of Students for (a Free) Tibet offers the fulfilling experience (of) fighting alongside a community dedicated to advocating for a positive

change,” Shekhang said.

A beneficial aspect of building a nonprofit organization is the connections one makes with others through involvement in the organization. “It’s been great to build this nonprofit, to feel part of a commu-

“It’s been great to build this nonprofit, to feel part of a community.”

Jack Mackey-Williams
BHS senior

nity. I’ve met some great people along the way,” Jack Mackey-Williams, a BHS senior, said. In the summer of 2022, Mackey-Williams, noticing the problem of low financial literacy among youth, co-founded the nonprofit organization, FLY to the World Youth. The nonprofit organization is dedicated to teaching youth how to responsibly manage resources and money by encouraging the teachings of financial literacy. Since

2022, FLY to the World Youth has taught over 500 students ranging from upper elementary to high school students.

An added bonus of being part of or founding a nonprofit organization is that the experience will convey a high school student’s passion and values on college applications. “It’s a good thing to show that you’re productive and interactive

with your community,” Alex Eraso, a BHS graduate, said. Eraso is no stranger to nonprofit organizations. During his sophomore year at BHS, Eraso and a group of his friends created a nonprofit called Bayrise, which is devoted to teaching underprivileged youth and helping the homeless. Many high school students start their own nonprofit organizations in an effort to boost their chances of getting accept-

ed into colleges. However, creating a truly meaningful and genuine nonprofit organization that creates a notable impact takes time and hard work. “You can

sort of see through (a fake nonprofit). The admissions officers can tell — they see so many of these, (and) they can see with the metrics and data that you give, how believable it is,” Eraso said.

Mackey-Williams discussed his opinion on the issue. “I feel like it’s selfish to just think about your own college applications instead of thinking of how you can support the community and make your area a better place,” Mackey-Williams said.

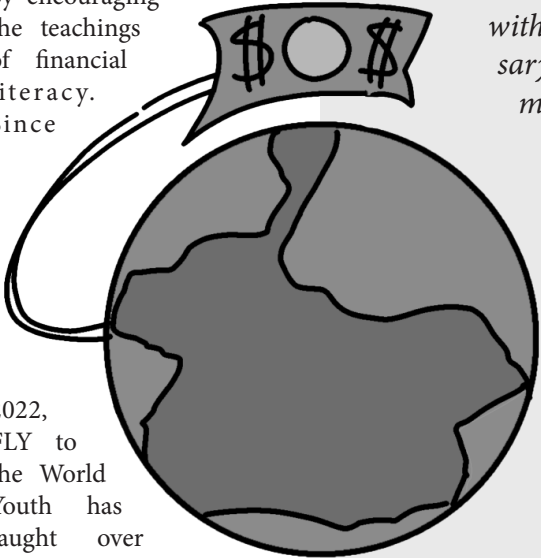
Building an impactful nonprofit organization, in high school and beyond, requires a commitment of great time and effort. Another needed quality is passion. “We’re really addressing a need in the community,” Mackey-Williams said.

FLY TO THE
WORLD

“Our mission is to equip young people with the skills and awareness necessary to manage their resources and money responsibly through storytelling and education.

We aim to create a global community bridging the wealth disparity by nurturing financial expertise, entrepreneurship, sustainability, economic empowerment, and universal financial inclusion through a global lens.”

- FLY to the World’s website



STUDENTS
FOR A
FREE TIBET

“Students for a Free Tibet (SFT) works in solidarity with the Tibetan people in their struggle for freedom and independence. We are a chapter-based network of young people and activists around the world. Through education, grassroots organizing, and nonviolent direct action, we campaign for Tibetans’ fundamental right to political freedom.

Our role is to empower and train youth as leaders in the worldwide movement for social justice.”

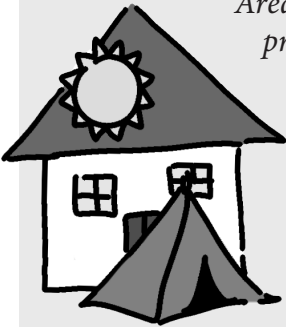
- Students for a Free Tibet’s website



BAYRISE

“BayRise is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit dedicated to creating positive change in the Bay Area. By providing enrichment programs to underprivileged youths, we hope to inspire the next generation of innovators, creators, and leaders to pursue their passions and reach their full potential.”

- Bayrise’s website



Competitive snow and ice sport athletes rush into winter season

BY NIALA LENZ-RASHID
staff writer

“It’s just the feeling of it, zooming down the mountain ... it’s an amazing hobby and even more than a hobby, just a passion that I have,” Sebastian Hyde, a Berkeley High School sophomore, said, “It’s different from a sport that you play like soccer or basketball, it’s in a different realm than any of those things.” Hyde will enter his second year skiing competitively in Tahoe this winter.

Living in Berkeley, where the last time record snow occurred was in the Roaring Twenties, poses many problems for students who find themselves with a craving for the frosty air and powdered slopes. Especially those who grew up making day trips to the mountain every time it snowed, or got their first pair of ice skates for Christmas as a child. For students like these, it can become easy to adopt a love and a talent for performing snow and ice sports competitively. However, with this adoration comes the reality of the short time frame possible for these extreme seasonal sports.

“You can only do (skiing) in the winter, so it’s a rare occurrence that you can do it,” Hyde said, “If you want to do

it competitively, then you need to prioritize your time during the ski season.”

Hyde recognized that this barrier often prevents others from being able to enjoy the sport he has been doing for more than half his life. He discussed how, in order to maintain the skills he has worked exceptionally hard for, he allocates time to ski during the winter season.

“Whenever I have a competition, it requires the entire weekend of that week. (There are) team practices for what must be 12 weeks, that’s every single weekend during the winter,” Hyde said, “It takes up a lot of my life. I can’t do much else in the winter (and) it’s a big commitment.”

Although skiing takes a great deal of effort, time, and patience, Hyde expressed that the love, enjoyment, and exhilaration he receives strongly encourages him to stay committed.

Hyde, however, is certainly not the only student that deals with these challenges of managing practice time, staying engaged, and making the three to four hour trip every weekend for competitions. Kai Mosavat, a BHS sophomore and competitive skier, expressed that due to

limited competition time and no satisfactory practice resources during the off season, he finds it extremely difficult to maintain his skills. “You can’t practice skiing outside of the winter (so) you lose a lot of the skill that you have over the summer unless you do a lot of practice,” Mosavat said, “I don’t really practice over the summer, (and) it definitely impacts my skill set.”

It is true that with only a few select months out of the year to get in all of the practice you need in preparation for competitions, it can be easy to fall behind, something an athlete who plays a year-round sport wouldn’t have to worry about. However, the challenge of only being able to practice for part of the year, is not only applicable for those who do ski or snow sports. Lyla Kahn is a BHS

freshman and has been an avid figure skater for almost four-years. Like many others who do winter sports, she finds it quite difficult to allocate time for practicing, particularly during the winter months. “I probably spend more time practicing in the summer than I do in the winter because of the amount of people it is almost impossible to get stuff done in a public session,” Kahn said.

Both Mosavat and Kahn have strong feelings surrounding the financial obstacles that

come with especially snow sports such as skiing and snowboarding. “I just wish that people could enjoy it the same way that I do ... I think that it should be something that’s more accessible,” Mosavat said. Unfortunately, sports that re-

quire many trips, expensive equipment, and lots of coaching are generally not financially attainable. “I feel like (cost) really restricts people, especially more advanced skaters, to go skating, without having to spend a lot of money,” Kahn said, “I think that’s definitely a big barrier.”



Students participating in winter sports practice discipline and commitment.

COURTESY OF SEBASTIAN HYDE

WORD ON THE STREET

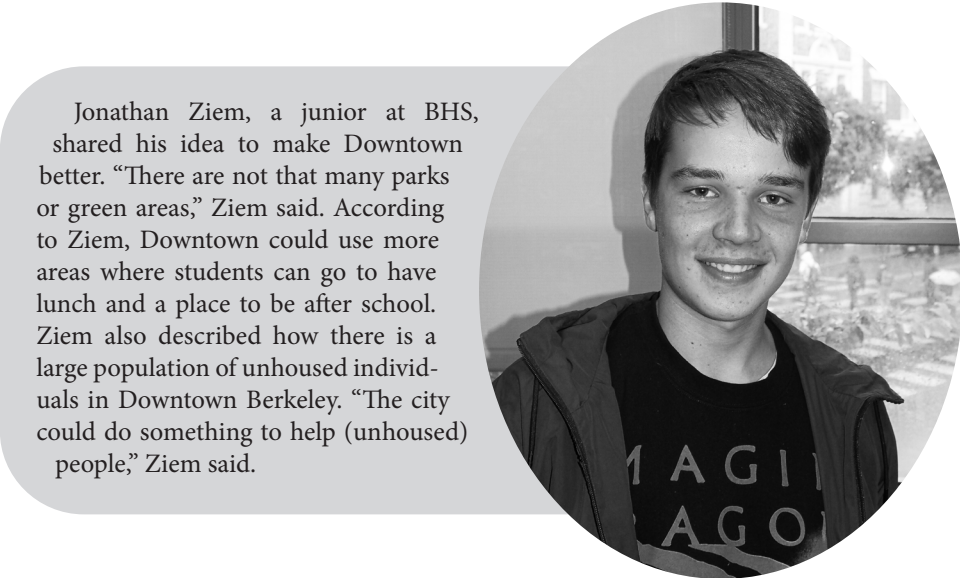
WHAT CAN WE DO TO REVITALIZE DOWNTOWN BERKELEY?



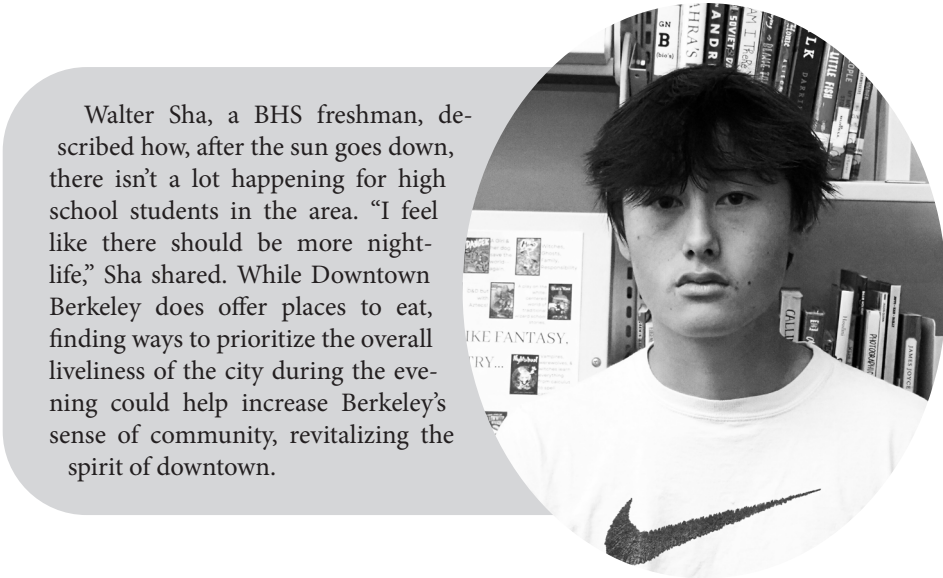
Lea Hireche, a junior at Berkeley High School, shared how in the past there hasn’t been a sense of safety when it comes to Downtown Berkeley. “(I’d suggest making it) feel a little safer there, because a lot of times there’s a lot of violence going down,” said Hireche. Hireche offers a solution to decrease this violence and increase safety through “taking better care of the streets, and maybe (implementing) cleanups.”



BHS senior Joseph Casely-Hayford had a creative perspective on how to improve Downtown Berkeley. “I think there should be Afrocentrism,” Caseley-Hayford said. Afrocentrism focuses on the influences of Africa or cultures of African origin. According to Casely-Hayford, this would be the first step to strengthening the Downtown Berkeley community by encouraging the expression and exploration of more cultures.



Jonathan Ziem, a junior at BHS, shared his idea to make Downtown better. “There are not that many parks or green areas,” Ziem said. According to Ziem, Downtown could use more areas where students can go to have lunch and a place to be after school. Ziem also described how there is a large population of unhoused individuals in Downtown Berkeley. “The city could do something to help (unhoused) people,” Ziem said.



Walter Sha, a BHS freshman, described how, after the sun goes down, there isn’t a lot happening for high school students in the area. “I feel like there should be more nightlife,” Sha shared. While Downtown Berkeley does offer places to eat, finding ways to prioritize the overall liveliness of the city during the evening could help increase Berkeley’s sense of community, revitalizing the spirit of downtown.

INTERVIEWS BY TEJAL DOPMAN
staff writer

PHOTOS BY SEBASTIAN FLETCHER
staff photographer

ENTERTAINMENT

ENTERTAINMENT EDITORS: AMAR WALKER & ANNIKA JOY

ANNIKAJOY@STUDENTS.BERKELEY.NET

ALBUM REVIEW: LIVE AT THE APOLLO BY JAMES BROWN

LAWRENCE BAUNACH



No one quite deserved the title of “The Hardest-Working Man in Show Business” more than James Brown. Seen as a father of several different musical styles, including funk and soul, Brown created a dynamic style that worked off the gospel, and R&B he had grown up listening to. With hits such as “Please Please Please,” Brown brought a chart-topping magic that challenged the popularity of primarily white success in the 1950s and 60s. There was a lot of white-washing in music, such as how the album cover for “Please Please Please” was manufactured to only show white people. Part of Brown’s legendary image was his heart-pounding live shows, which are shown no better than in “Live at the Apollo,” a live release from May 1963. Brown collaborated with his backing band, The Famous Flames, who assisted him on much of his early work.

From the eye catching watercolor of the album’s cover to the jazzy horn section behind each pounding beat, “Live at the Apollo” thrives on action and thrills, blitzing through its first five tracks like it’s sliding on smooth butter. The album soon reaches its highest point on “Lost Someone,” a nearly 11 minute romp through the vestiges of soul. The backing band acts as an anthem for victory as Brown laments a lost love, managing to somehow overtake the strong instrumentation with his beautiful, pleading vocals, almost like he’s begging on his knees at the sky. The cheering crowd, complimenting every track, are like their own distended vocal harmonies to Brown’s croon, cheering, but never to the point that they overtake the track, only adding to the atmosphere of the song, which is the same for the band, only complimenting Brown after he sings. If that wasn’t enough, the next song is the epic “Medley,” looking into Brown’s discography, and on its whole, the history of R&B up to that point, the song is a nine act play done in just six and a half minutes. If “Lost Someone” was a romp, “Medley” is a sprint only worthy of Usain Bolt. The album closes after that with “Night Train” not letting the action stop until the very last second with a train-chugging blues rhythm.

“Live at the Apollo” was a major success, reaching number two on the Billboard Pop Albums Chart, and becoming a favorite of DJs, who often liked to play the album in its entirety. The album is seen as the height of Brown’s early career, defining him as a star of R&B and soul, which would never quite be replicated, as Brown would go on to develop a more funk style during the late 1960s to 70s. James Brown would end up becoming a majorly sampled artist by people in hip-hop, and is seen as a near universal inspiration. This album is unlike anything else in music history, and is best heard to be believed.

Dance production swings through decades

BY CECILIA TILES
staff writer

Berkeley High School’s Florence Schwimley Little Theater exploded with nostalgic music, choreography, and thunderous applause on Friday and Saturday, Dec. 6 and 7 for the Dance Production show. Teachers and students alike pulled off an incredible performance, truly “dancing through the decades.”

Before the show, Visual and Performing Arts Dance teacher Linda Carr walked on to the stage, greeted by a welcoming applause. In her introduction, she appreciated the dancers hard work and dedication, while also proudly noting that nearly every seat in the theater was taken.

“Ms. Carr was really supportive and especially in this show she just understood what we were going through,” said performer and choreographer Grace Gundelfinger.

This year’s semester one dance showcase follows the theme “Dancing through the Decades.” The performances moved in chronological order through 18 separate dance acts; starting with a classic 16th century waltz, and ending with 90s and 2000s hip-hop numbers. Primarily student choreographed, every dance was unique, interesting, and enjoyable to watch.

The first performance of the night was a dance called “From the Viennese Ballroom,” choreographed by Ms. Carr. The dance incorporated 10 dancers, all of whom glided across the stage in a carefully coordinated waltz. This opener helped the audience understand the premise of the night. While every single performance was well-done, there were certainly a few standouts and crowd favorites. These included an interpretation of the famous



mous Chicago showtune; “Cell Block Tango.” With the stage bathed in red light, six dancers sat in chairs, one by one moving to the front of the stage to perform a solo while lip-syncing to the original music. The Cell Block Tango is an edgy and catchy song that tells the story of six women and why they murdered their husbands. The performers dressed in black clothes and fishnets, using a red scarf to signify the death of each of their husbands. Despite the crazy premise of the song, the performers did a wonderful job portraying each of the women in an entertaining and eye-catching way.

“I enjoyed the act of the song from Chicago,” BHS sophomore and audience member Dinah Cohen said. “I thought it was cool that the dancers put some of their own personality into it.”

Later in the show, there were many incredible performances referencing the 90s and 2000s. This included big ensemble pieces, like “Back to the ‘00s” choreographed by the Advanced Dance Lab. The number was a mashup of songs by Missy Elliot, Aaliyah, Rihanna and Sean Paul.

The comedic dance “Boyz R Back,” choreographed by Ayla Conway, included a mashup of songs from B2K, the Backstreet Boys, and NSYNC. The dancers, dressed in baggy jeans and white



Students performing “Swing” and “Cell Block Tango.” USNEA MCEWEN

tank tops, were hilarious in their crisp performance and imitation of popular boy-bands and dance styles of the time. It was a crowd pleaser, with people singing along and cheering enthusiastically.

While the ensemble pieces were incredible, the solos, duets, and trios also wowed. One was the nostalgic dance “Dancing Queen,” choreographed by Grace Gundelfinger who also performed in the number. “It was hard but it’s also fun. I felt like the more I got through it the easier it got,” Gundelfinger said, “It was just really fun to see all of our hard work pay off and just experience the show coming to life.”

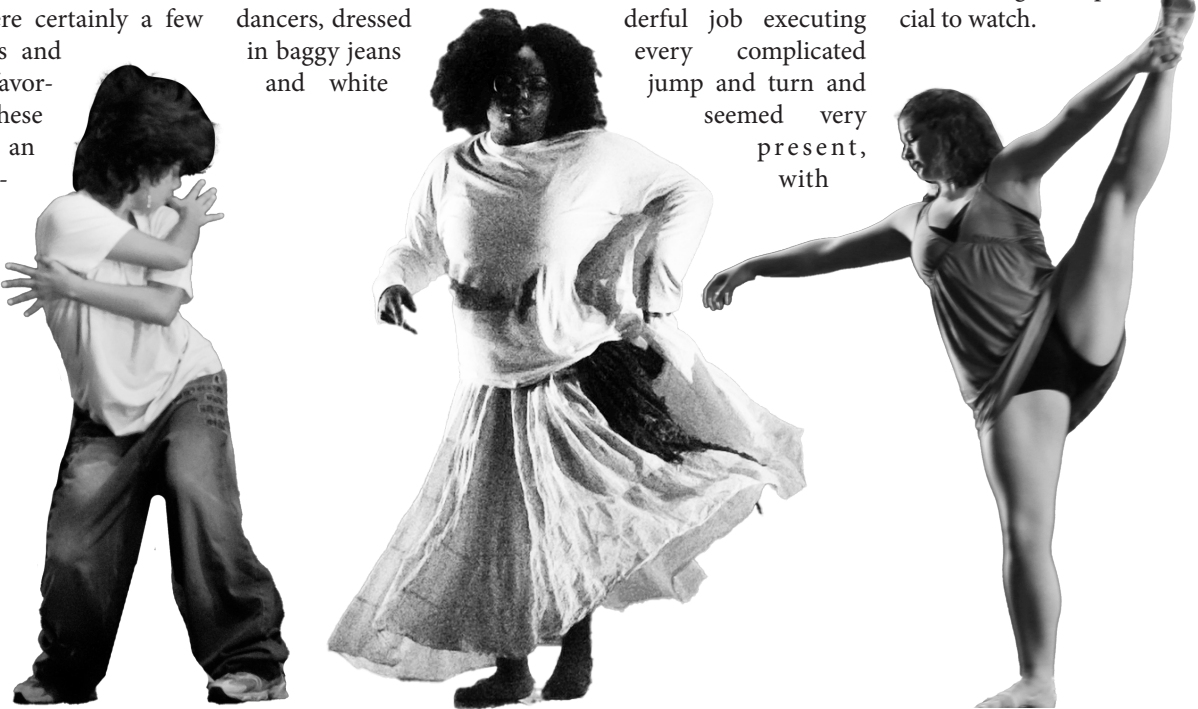
Another impressive performance was the solo Contemporary Ballet piece “Woman’s Work,” choreographed by Bria Matubrew, and danced by Rose Levine. One of the only solo pieces of the night, Levine gracefully danced her heart out to Kate Bush’s “This Woman’s

Work.” Levine did a wonderful job executing every complicated jump and turn and seemed very present, with

an expressive and emotion-filled face. The audience seemed to like the dance immediately, cheering at every turn and trick. Other solo performances included a vocal performance, and a solo dance to Marvin Sapp’s “Never Would Have Made It,” a powerful piece beautifully performed and choreographed by Gabby Johnson-Rizzo.

The “Dancing through the Decades” performance was an huge success. With a packed audience, talented dancers, tech teams, and teachers all coming together to create something truly beautiful — a show that appealed every generation.

“Even though all the songs were only 10 years apart, they’re all super different dances and a big variety of music so I think just having that made it all really incredible,” audience member Anabel Orozco said. The dance production classes at BHS have more in store; if the next show is anything like this one, it will be entertaining and special to watch.



Dance Production Performers (from left to right): Maria Sanchez Perez, Gabby Johnson-Rizzo, Rose Levine. PHOTOS BY USNEA MCEWEN & KAI HANSCHEN

‘Boys, let’s brawl:’ The Berkeley High Brawl Stars epidemic

BY SIMON VAN DUSEN
staff writer

“Hop on Brawl” is a phrase heard commonly at Berkeley High School. Emerging from the popular video game Brawl Stars, it’s a way for friends to tell each other that they want to play. Brawl Stars was designed by the Finnish video mobile game company Supercell, who has raised our generation on their games. Creating popular games such as Clash of Clans, Hayday, and Clash Royale, they have amassed a total of 200 million monthly players across all of their platforms. In 2018, they released the mobile game Brawl Stars, which has slowly taken the mobile game platform by storm.

“It’s just really portable, you know, wherever I am, I’ve got my phone. I can just get it out and I can say to my friends ‘boys, let’s brawl,’” Max Zoidis, a junior at BHS said.

At BHS, the game is very popular among all students, due to its simplicity, availability, and ability to play with friends. “Last year and the beginning of this year, almost everyone I knew played Brawl Stars,” Will Herndon, a BHS junior, said.

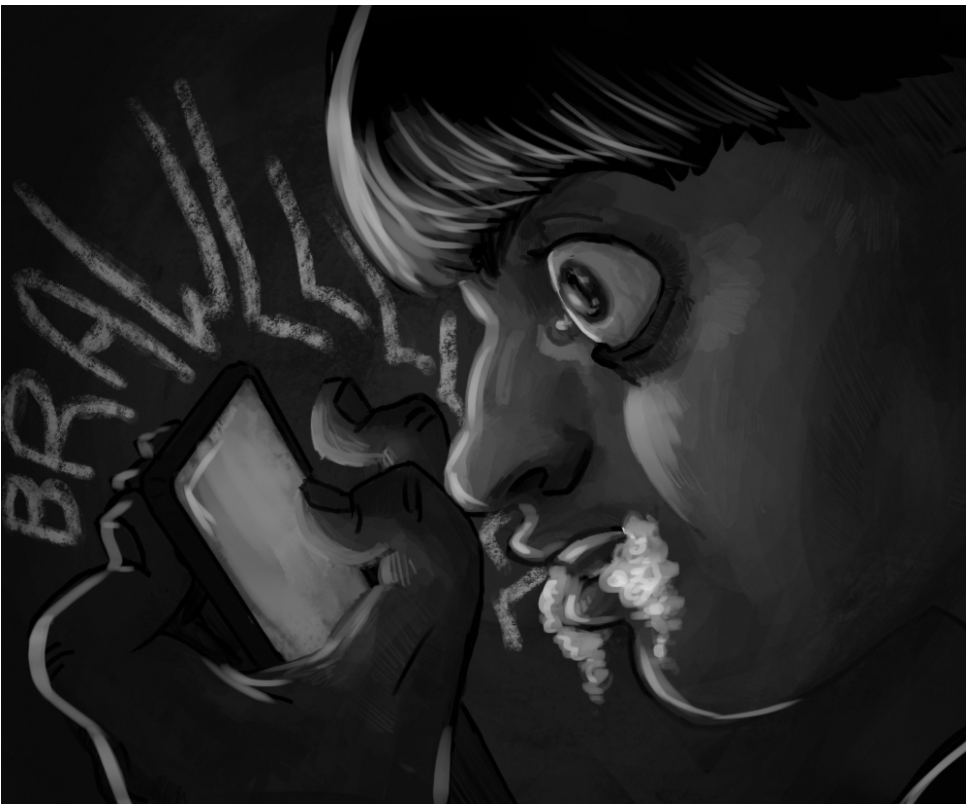
The game requires little effort to learn due to its simplistic controls and self explanatory game modes. As a result, it appeals to a wide range of students and people, of all ages and genders. When walking into classes or down the halls at BHS, it’s almost a guarantee you will see someone playing the game.

The gameplay consists of a multiplayer battle royale, with many different game modes and ways to play. “Basically, it’s a combat game with different characters you can unlock. These characters have different abilities, and overall just a really fun game,” Herndon said.

“You’re controlling a character, and a bunch of characters go into a map, and the object of the game is to eliminate the other characters and be the last one standing,” Zoidis said.

However, the game is also extremely popular because of the community it creates. With one click of a button you can invite friends to your party and play together, whether or not you are next to each other, or across the world. “I enjoy playing Brawl Stars because of the camaraderie of course, playing with my friends is a fun way to bond,” Zoidis said. The game’s features also allow for up to 10 friends to play together all at once in a competitive match.

On the other hand, Brawl Stars has been known to negatively impact student’s ability to focus in class, as well as to cause disruptions. “Probably every single time I’ve worked with my friend in class, he spends the entire time playing Brawl Stars.



SAWYER M.B. ERCH

That’s been a pretty bad experience because then I have to do double the work,” BHS junior Sophia Nishioka said. This can lead to a decline in grades, and affect players’ academics.

Nishioka is also co-president of the Berkeley Community Works club at BHS. While clubs have more casual meetings, interruptions can still be irritating.

“People are on their

phones in clubs. That’s just a reality. I don’t have a problem with that as long as you’re quiet. However, the people in my club that play Brawl Stars will scream periodically and get up from their seats and cause a disruption. And that’s really a problem for me because when I’m trying to tell people what to do, they’re screaming, they’re getting all mad and I have to take

the phones away just so everyone can focus,” Nishioka said.

With its ups and downs, Brawl Stars has been a prominent part of the BHS community. Its fun, addictive, and easy nature has attracted countless players and helped form many friendships. However, with finals on the horizon, it may be time to stop brawling and start studying.

‘Curl Police:’ Protecting or gate keeping curly hair identity?



ALISA KARIN KOLPAKOLVA

BY ZOE DILWORTH
staff writer

What makes curly hair curly, and why is this question so hotly debated? Curls form early on, when a curved hair follicle’s protein causes a strand to twist and coil. Between genetics, hormones, and environment, there are infinite ways for curls to develop, as well as numerous different types of textures.

Terms like “2C” and “4A” get thrown around, derived from a manufactured scale that ranges from a straight type one to type four, which signifies coily hair. The let-

ters indicate the tightness of the curls. This scale was created in the 90s by Andre Walker, a businessman and hairstylist, but the concept of hair typing goes as far back as the early 1900s. This prior form of hair typing was rooted in racism, being a way to quantify a person’s proximity to whiteness.

Today, the modern hair typing scale is used for a different form of categorization, where people take to social media comment sections to pick apart hair types, deeming whether or not someone’s hair is truly curly — the so-called “curl police.” A trend in recent years has been for those

questioning their hair type to document their hair journeys and curl routines, and from that, tension has stemmed.

Ruby Fitzpatrick Jarvis, Berkeley High School junior and curly-haired girl herself, has seen this debate often.

“I define curly hair as having the majority of your hair tightly coiled. It takes a lot of work and a solid routine with lots of different products that actually makes it look good. A lot of people have wavy hair, whereas curly hair is more varied,” Fitzpatrick Jarvis said, “I think the ‘curl police’ is not something that should be taken seriously. People go

through their own hair journeys, and supporting ‘the curl police’ is a way of doing so.”

Curl policing oftentimes comes from a place of curly pride, and wanting to preserve the identity formed around it. It is not an inherently negative thing, but can instead be lighthearted and informative. BHS freshman Ayshia Bell-Vorkoeper has noticed the two sides of this policing; one where it’s beneficial and the other where it’s hurtful.

“I usually see the curl police in comments of videos of people who have wavy hair or loose curls. Sometimes the curl police are good because there are people who say that their waves are curls, but sometimes they are bad because they say people with loose curls are ‘forcing their curls.’ They can make people feel insecure or unsure about their hair,” Bell-Vorkoeper said.

ing heat rollers, their texture is their own, and dismissing these different forms of curls and waves is not beneficial to anyone.

While Walker’s original intention with his system was to categorize his own hair care line, his hair defining terminology has become widespread. The broad reach of the scale has led to its misuse, as well as a number of criticisms. Despite Walker being Black himself, people have questioned a potential hierarchy, where the system values Black hair textures below straight. Its effectiveness also comes into question, as the scale doesn’t factor in density and porosity, two big components of hair texture. Moreover, with

diss Youngblood, the AP/IB Studio Art teacher, understands the difficulty many face with their own hair textures.

“I am a curly haired girl, and I’ve had a very complicated relationship with my hair, you know, it’s flat ironed right now. So, yes, there’s definitely something about being a curly haired girl that straight haired people will never understand, and sometimes people who have wavy hair, they maybe more fit into a straight hair category to some of us curly haired girls. So I understand that. I just don’t think there needs to be the, kind of like, aggressive back and forth part to it. I think it could be a little bit more like, we all just like to share a little bit about ourselves and have commonalities with one another,” Youngblood said.

Curly hair takes a lot of work, and it’s a texture that has historically been deemed

People take to social media comment sections to pick apart hair types, deeming whether or not someone’s hair is truly curly — the so-called “curl police.”

The idea of “forcing” curls often comes in the form of an accusation. When a person has loose curls or waves, they may face criticism for “forcing” their naturally straight hair to have texture through the use of various products and curl methods. More often than not, however, texture is not something that can be forced. Unless a person is perming their hair or us-

its A to C, one to four scale creating only 12 options, it is simply not enough to categorize the diversity of hair types, unsurprising given that the system at its core is a marketing tactic.

Another topic debated by the “curl police” is what it means to live with curly hair. The high maintenance of curly hair, they argue, makes it stand apart from looser curls and waves. Can-

as not fitting the western beauty standard. The effort, as well as the pervasive form of othering, makes some feel as though the curly identity is something that needs to be protected, hence the “curl police.” However, over categorization is an issue too, and when curly hair is gate kept, it is often just a new iteration of that unnecessary exclusivity from the other side.

‘Wicked:’ Pink and green move from Broadway to the big screen

BY AKHILA NARAYAN
staff writer

Wicked has always had a legacy to live up to. From Frank L. Baum’s 1900 novel, “The Wonderful Wizard of Oz,” to the classic 1939 movie “The Wizard of Oz,” to Gregory Maguire’s 1995 book “Wicked” and its subsequent stage adaptation, which still runs on Broadway today. Needless to say, “Wicked” the movie has a lot to draw from — but this also comes with large pre-existing fan bases to please.

“Wicked” tells the origin story of the villain in “The Wizard of Oz,” the Wicked Witch of the West. In the 1939 movie, Dorothy Gale melts her with a bucket of water after the Wizard of Oz instructs her to bring him the Wicked Witch’s broomstick. In “Wicked,” her name is Elphaba.

Throughout the film Elphaba (Cynthia Erivo) learns to wield her rare magical powers at Oz’s Shiz

University, hoping to someday meet the Wizard (Jeff Goldblum). Meanwhile, she harbors an “unadulterated loathing” for her roommate, Galinda (Ariana Grande), which over time develops into a strong and unlikely friendship.

The film ends with Elphaba escaping on her broomstick after discovering, as Dorothy does in the 1939 film, that the Wizard is not what he was promised to be. Most of the story is left unresolved, leaving “Wicked Part Two” with many plotlines to tie up.

The best aspect of this movie is its cast. Goldblum crafts a Wizard that comes off as both funny and dangerous. Jonathan Bailey perfectly exhibits the dashing yet secretly complicated Prince Fivero. Eve Eyal, a Berkeley High School sophomore and fan of the musical, comments, “(Bailey) made it his own ... But he did it in a good way, that didn’t undermine the original vibes.”

Grande’s voice reaches incredible high notes that capture Galinda’s vain yet caring nature. She nails Galinda’s little self-centered quips and is easily the funniest cast member. The peak of Grande’s performance is her physical comedy, with her over-the-top hair flips and exaggerated facial expressions.

However, no performance outshines that of Erivo. She uses her immense vocal and acting talents to develop Elphaba’s character. First, she portrays a girl who sees nothing in her future and idolizes the Wizard. With her belting voice, Erivo matures the character, from the adolescent elation of “The Wizard and I,” to the end scene of “Defying Gravity” where her voice reaches fullness.

The director of “Wicked,” Jon M. Chu clearly wished to preserve some of the original Broadway charm. The cast sang live on set, and the film features cameos from the original produc-



COURTESY OF UNIVERSAL PICTURES

tion’s Elphaba and Galinda, Idina Menzel and Kirstin Chenoweth. Bria Matubrew, a BHS sophomore who also saw the stage production and the movie, noticed a lot of similarities between the two. “There were a lot of little jokes they took from the musical that they put in the movie.”

However, one feature that has not carried over well from stage to screen is the world of Oz. A stage set is naturally confined, so not fully developing Oz is excusable on Broadway. On screen, such under development is jarring. Somehow, the 1939 “Wizard of Oz,” with its plastic sets and hand-painted backgrounds, makes Oz feel expansive. Yet, something about the

pristine backgrounds of “Wicked” feels shallow and uninhabited. One does not get the sense that Shiz is an actual school, and it feels as though Munchkinland and the Emerald City consist of only what we can see of them. How the land of Oz managed to remain underdeveloped over the film’s staggering duration of two hours and forty minutes is a mystery.

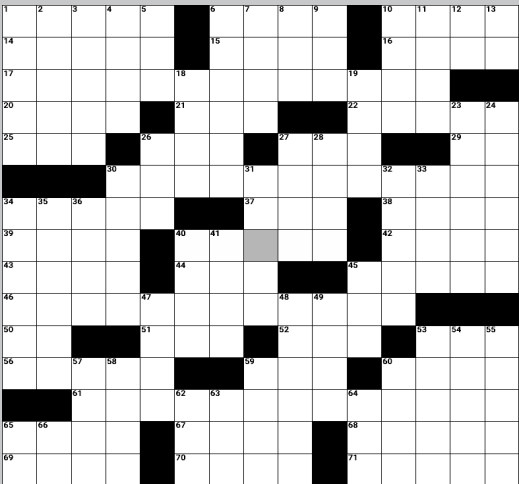
Eyal, who also saw “Wicked” on stage in San Francisco, attributes the length of the film to drawn-out dialogue, “The extra time came from them just looking at each other. They added in an entire hour of pregnant pauses.”

Nevertheless, Chu and his cast nail the emotional

richness of the story. The movie opens with the announcement of the death of the Wicked Witch of the West and the citizens of Munchkinland throwing a celebration in honor of the good news. Which is why watching Elphaba’s friendship with Galinda blossom and her singing confidently that nothing will ever bring her down is heartbreaking. The audience knows Galinda will turn against her, and they know that Elphaba will die in the end.

Even when one knows the ending, one can’t help but get attached to the characters of “Wicked.” BHS freshman Ellah Altman jokes, “My only critique is that I do not think I can wait for part two.”

THE CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- 1. Backyard spaces for bicycles or paint buckets
- 6. Indonesian “Island of the Gods”
- 10. Worms, for fish
- 14. ____ truck (yellow children’s toy)
- 15. Color near a pupil
- 16. What’s in your cage?
- 17. 1996 Counting Crows single — or like the few weeks before finals
- 20. Depend (on)
- 21. Abbreviation in an Ebay listing
- 22. Group of Norse Gods
- 25. Vitamin bottle fig.
- 26. Star pitcher, for example
- 27. Hockey star Bobby
- 29. Short accompaniment part on piano?
- 30. “Patriotic” track by Sufjan Stevens, Fall Out Boy, Mariah Carey, or Soundgarden
- 34. Top room in the house
- 37. “Universal” charging cable
- 38. First gentleman?
- 39. Name for a pet pig?
- 40. SNL comedian Fineman
- 42. Body part that runs
- 43. Singer-songwriter Apollo
- 44. Japanese assent
- 45. Sounds from a sty
- 46. 1932 jazz standard made famous by Count Basie
- 50. About
- 51. Himalayan bovine
- 52. Actress Gadot
- 53. “Truthfully...,” over text
- 56. Harry, Ron, and Hermione’s rival
- 59. Batteries often used in cameras or flashlights
- 60. Singer-songwriter Amos
- 61. Grammy most recently won by Billie Eilish
- 65. Cuatro y cuatro
- 67. Kissing sound
- 68. Small amount
- 69. Simon ____
- 70. Michael of “Juno”
- 71. Boxes on a calendar

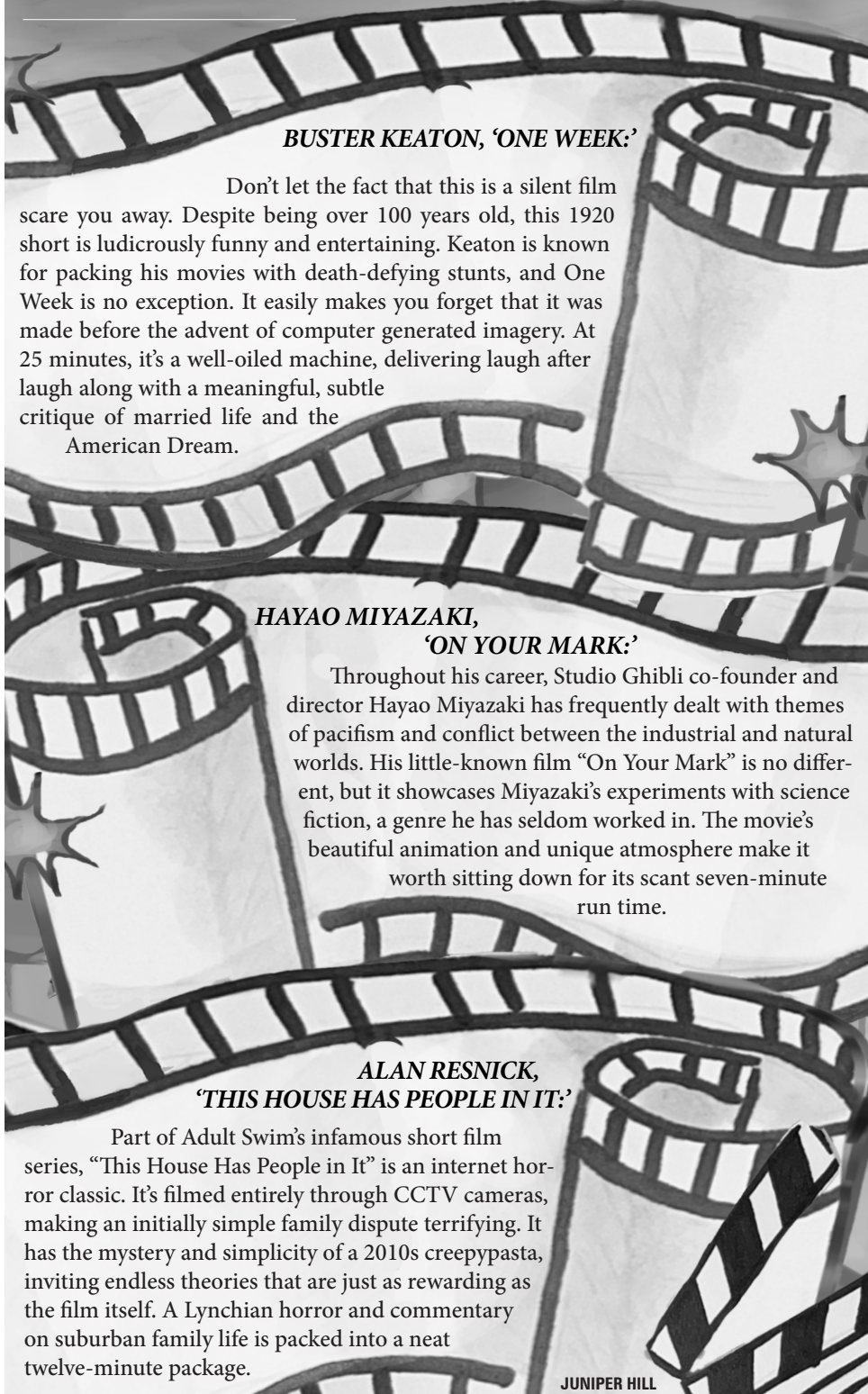
DOWN

- 1. Beatles’ drummer
- 2. ____ up in (hid)
- 3. ____ Holmes (Netflix film starring Millie Bobby Brown)
- 4. Big letters in fashion
- 5. Hang down
- 6. “Baby” singer
- 7. Dance style most similar to gymnastics
- 8. Whopper
- 9. Believable suffix?
- 10. Marcia’s character on “Desperate Housewives”
- 11. Is on TV
- 12. BHS small school that leads to a globally recognized diploma
- 13. A shorter Taylor Swift?
- 18. Quick biopic, for one?
- 19. Throw up
- 23. “Let me find out”
- 24. Writes couplets
- 26. U.S. rep. from New York’s 14th district
- 27. Very much
- 28. What comes after a bath?
- 30. Guy on TV?
- 31. Flower often used in a gardening pun
- 32. Joplin or Ian
- 33. Thick wheat noodle
- 34. On the ship
- 35. Mess with
- 36. Alternative to a chairlift
- 40. Healthy seeds
- 41. Country-blues musician Williams
- 45. Word with baby or olive
- 47. Third-largest French city
- 48. Novelist Christie
- 49. Allergic reaction, often
- 53. “Comer” or “manger”?
- 54. ____ oneself (prepare for a blow)
- 55. Adds to payroll
- 57. Like the ground around a campfire
- 58. Dove noises
- 59. Where one yearns from, often
- 60. Model Banks
- 62. SUV maker
- 63. Need to pay
- 64. When one expects to leave
- 65. Latin mouth
- 66. Our state

— Violet Kessler

Short Film Recommendations

BY ELI LEICHTER WILSON
staff writer



BUSTER KEATON, ‘ONE WEEK:’

Don’t let the fact that this is a silent film scare you away. Despite being over 100 years old, this 1920 short is ludicrously funny and entertaining. Keaton is known for packing his movies with death-defying stunts, and One Week is no exception. It easily makes you forget that it was made before the advent of computer generated imagery. At 25 minutes, it’s a well-oiled machine, delivering laugh after laugh along with a meaningful, subtle critique of married life and the American Dream.

HAYAO MIYAZAKI, ‘ON YOUR MARK:’

Throughout his career, Studio Ghibli co-founder and director Hayao Miyazaki has frequently dealt with themes of pacifism and conflict between the industrial and natural worlds. His little-known film “On Your Mark” is no different, but it showcases Miyazaki’s experiments with science fiction, a genre he has seldom worked in. The movie’s beautiful animation and unique atmosphere make it worth sitting down for its scant seven-minute run time.

ALAN RESNICK, ‘THIS HOUSE HAS PEOPLE IN IT:’

Part of Adult Swim’s infamous short film series, “This House Has People in It” is an internet horror classic. It’s filmed entirely through CCTV cameras, making an initially simple family dispute terrifying. It has the mystery and simplicity of a 2010s creepypasta, inviting endless theories that are just as rewarding as the film itself. A Lynchian horror and commentary on suburban family life is packed into a neat twelve-minute package.

JUNIPER HILL

The marvelous magic of Quidditch flies to UC Berkeley team

BY SOPHIE DRESKIN
staff writer

Usually, when one thinks about the game of Quidditch, they picture flying broomsticks, dodging bludgers, and of course, magical golden snitches. This might sound like pure fantasy, but real life Quidditch, also known as Quid-

ball, inspired by the fantastical sport in the “Harry Potter” series, has been turned into a sport played around the world. The sport began in 2005 at Middlebury College in Vermont, and quickly spread throughout other universities. Though of course, players do not truly fly through the air after golden snitches, they have adapted the game to make it

accessible to Muggles everywhere. The idea began with two people who decided that they wanted to bring the incredible game to life. It rapidly became a popular sport among colleges across the world, with the first Quidditch world cup taking place only two years after the sport was officially created. Today, the magical sport

brought to life has a governing body, the International Quidditch Association, and there are global tournaments every two years. One popular quidditch

both the snitch referee and the head referee. The main difference between Muggle Quidditch and wizarding Quidditch, aside from the clear lack of magic and fly-

the four-maximum rule was created. This rule promotes gender equality on the field, stating that there cannot be more than four players of the same gender playing at one time.

“Quidditch is so unique due to the four max rule. I can’t think of many other team sports that have been co-ed since the beginning,” re-

“The sport creates an accepting and close-knit community here at Cal. We can’t take it for granted.”

Chloe Foo
UC Berkeley Student and Quidball Captain

ing in the Muggle version, is that catching the snitch doesn’t automatically win the game in the real life version. It instead gives the catching team a 30 point advantage. Players do have to play with broomsticks between their legs in order to keep the game authentic. While this may seem funny and absurd at first, it actually creates an additional physical challenge for the players, and makes the sport more unique.

Quidditch’s thoughtfulness does not end with its gameplay. It also strives to create an inclusive space for all players, which is why

flected UC Berkeley student Sing Chan, another member of the Cal Quidball team. The four-maximum rule fosters a welcoming and open environment for players of the co-ed game, allowing every player to feel comfortable and heard on the Quidditch field, regardless of their gender. In all, the sport of Quidball has become a way for college students and “Harry Potter” fans to connect all across the United States. “The sport creates an accepting and close-knit community here at Cal,” Foo said, “We can’t take it for granted.”



The Cal Quidball Team cultivates a close, inclusive community. COURTESY OF CAL QUIDBALL

New womens soccer coach prioritizes balanced environment

BY YOSHI ROHN
staff writer

This year, Berkeley High School has welcomed Coach John Tamrat as the new head coach for the womens varsity soccer team. As the girls freshman soccer team’s coach for the past five years, this isn’t Tamrat’s first year with the program and players, however, it is his first year stepping into the role of varsity head coach. He brings with him an abundance of experience, a deep passion for the sport, and a vision for success both on and off the field. For Tamrat, this role is more than just a coaching position, it’s a chance to give back to the sport that shaped his life.

“Being named head coach of (Berkeley High School’s) varsity girls soccer team is incredibly meaningful to me because I’ve seen firsthand how transformative soccer can be,” Tamrat said. He has felt a very deep connection to soccer throughout his entire life. “The game has given me lifelong friendships, opportunities, and a sense of community,” Tamrat said.

His hope is to develop his players not only as driven athletes, but also as confident, creative, and resilient individuals. Tamrat’s coaching philosophy emphasizes building a culture of hard work, while prioritizing player development and

teamwork. “Success on the field starts with a commitment to hard work, discipline, and a high standard of excellence to everything we do,” he said.

On the soccer field, Tamrat coaches a high-tempo and possession-based style of play, with plenty of room for players to showcase creativity and confidence in execution of skills on the ball. He hopes to create a competitive training environment where players push themselves and each other to improve every practice and everyday. “By competing at a high level in practice, players not only sharpen their own skills, but also elevate their teammates’ performance,” Tamrat said.

Alongside this environment built on intensity and holding each other accountable, he is focused on encouraging players to rise to challenges and support one another whenever they are able to do so.

With the ability to achieve these goals both on and off the field, Tamrat is setting specific goals, for both this season and upcoming years within the program. “I want us to compete at a high level, play with confidence, and build a sense of identity as a

team,” he said. Long term, Tamrat envisions creating a program that consistently contends

“Success on the field starts with a commitment to hard work, discipline, and a high standard of excellence to everything we do,”

John Tamrat
Womens Varsity Soccer Coach

for championships, while also holding a reputation for a positive environment. He hopes to empower young

athletes to succeed in soccer and beyond the field.

BHS sophomore and varsity soccer player Vivien Chiu expressed optimism about having Tamrat as the head coach. “I was excited because when I had met him last year, I thought he was really nice and communicative,” Chiu said about Tamrat. Chiu believes that Tamrat’s clear communication skills and positive feedback are standout quali-

ties that will promote success. “I think the team has adapted, and there’s been a little bit of a change in team culture from last year because of the difference in coaching styles,” Chiu said about the coaching transition.

For Tamrat, the most rewarding part of coaching is seeing how the players grow, on and off the soccer pitch. “Watching someone gain confidence, master a new skill, or achieve something they didn’t think was possible is incredibly fulfilling,” Tamrat said. He feels that learning discipline in a sport, especially from a

younger age, can help players grow in all aspects of their character. “I love being part of their journey, whether it’s a big win, a personal breakthrough, or seeing how the life lessons from soccer translate into their lives beyond the game,” Tamrat said.

Tamrat has high hopes for player development and team wins during this season at BHS. He is especially fond of seeing how happy players are when their hard work and practice can finally pay off with big wins. “Those moments remind me why I continue this journey as a coach,” Tamrat said.



John Tamrat emphasizes creating a culture of both personal excellence and teammates supporting each other. SYLVIA ROUBINIAN

SPORTS

SPORTS EDITORS: CLARA TJEN & LULI GALINSON

Frosh teams foster sense of community

BY MILES WISE
staff writer

As the winter athletics season kicks off at Berkeley High School, a sense of camaraderie is growing among the school’s new freshman athletes. With some athletic programs drawing a large number of students trying out, BHS is able to form freshman teams across various sports. This winter, fueled with bubbling excitement for the action packed months ahead, the freshman boys soccer team, the girls freshman and sophomore soccer team, and the freshman boys basketball team, have officially launched their seasons into full swing.

Transitioning to the large 3,000+ student body at BHS from a significantly smaller middle school can

sometimes feel daunting or intimidating for some freshmen. However, having a group of peers of the same age to connect with and build friendships with, whether it be on the court or on the field, can help freshmen find a smaller and tighter community within the large campus at BHS. Charles Loeper, a BHS freshman on the boys freshman basketball team, shared how being part of a team has helped him find community in the large student body of BHS. “Being a freshman, it’s kind of nerve wracking, but knowing people through basketball and through sports can be reassuring,” Loeper said, “Just having your own community, people you spend so much time with and get to know so well, knowing they’ll support you, is so helpful.”

Similarly, Sofia Quezada-Hernandez, a BHS freshman on the girls freshman soccer team, appreciates how the team has helped her feel more connected to BHS and values the friendship opportunities the team has provided her. For Quezada-Hernandez, her teammates are more than just teammates, they’re family. “I’ve met a lot of cool people and I feel like the team’s becoming a family,” Quezada-Hernandez said, “Being part of a freshman team has helped me feel more a part of the BHS community.”

This importance of community is echoed by Kennan Yilmaz, a BHS freshman on the boys freshman soccer team, who values the opportunity to connect with fellow freshmen. “Just at tryouts, I saw a lot of people that

I haven’t really seen throughout the whole year and it was good to meet them,” Yilmaz said. For many students, forming friendships can be challenging, but being part of a team of fellow freshmen provides a space to meet new people and foster connections.

For some freshmen, playing with peers allows a chance to step into leadership roles that are usually more difficult to step into when playing with older teammates. Boys freshman soccer team player, Asa Charney-Weintraub, expressed how this opportunity is important to him, saying, “I think the team provides me an opportunity to be more of a leader, because usually I’m playing with people who are older than me.”



Berkeley High School boys freshman soccer team huddles in preparation for match.

LEO SMOCK

Upcoming Game Schedule:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Friday, December 13th | Boys soccer vs. Hayward (JV @ 4:30, Varsity @ 6:30) |
| Saturday, December 14th | Boys soccer vs. San Ramon Valley (Frosh @ 11, JV @ 1, Varsity @ 3) |
| Thursday, December 19th | Girls basketball vs. Jesse Bethel (JV @ 4, Varsity @ 5:30) |
| Friday, December 20th | Girls soccer vs. Carondelet (JV @ 4, Varsity @ 6) |
| Friday, December 20th | Girls basketball vs. Rancho Cotate (JV @ 5:30, Varsity @ 7) |
| Saturday December 21st | Girls soccer vs. Freedom (JV @ 5:00, Varsity @ 3:00) |
| Sunday December 22nd | Boys Soccer vs. Dougherty Valley (JV @ 11:00, Varsity @ 1:00) |



PABLO SWEET FUENTES Athlete Profile

Pablo Sweet Fuentes is a Berkeley High School senior who plays striker and right back on the BHS boys varsity soccer team. He began playing soccer when he was only four years old, drawing inspiration from his grandfather, who has always loved watching and playing the sport. He enjoys the energy and competitiveness of the sport, but also recognizes the challenges that come along with playing. In his soccer career, Sweet Fuentes has had to overcome various injuries, but soccer has taught him the ability to focus on his goals and achievements, rather than his setbacks. “Getting injured, or losing a game, it’s hard,” Sweet Fuentes said, “I have to make sure to remember what I’ve accomplished and what I can accomplish, and focus on the future.” Additionally, soccer has exposed him to the important skill of how to be an effective leader and collaborator. “(Soccer) has shown me how to help guide others in ways I haven’t before, and helps me with my own mental health too,” Sweet Fuentes shared. Sweet Fuentes hopes to continue playing soccer in college and eventually in Spain, one of the world’s epicenters for the sport.

— Sophie Dreskin



DANIELA SIERRA ROMERO