

## Editors Column

## Films on Screen This Summer



Erin Jang  
Grade 12  
Troy High School



In many homes this summer the TV screen is immediately turned to Amazon Prime Video, another platform to stream the latest films.

[Source: Author, Erin Jang]

The summer of 2022 remains a thrilling break for most students, as a variety of exciting television shows and movies have been released. With more time to hang out with family and friends, particularly by visiting the theater or grabbing the remote in the family room, several

films have been placed on this summer's list of trends.

Signifying the start of summer, the series based on Jenny Han's *The Summer I Turned Pretty* was released on June 17 and immediately caused a stir. The social media platform TikTok was clear evidence of the romance TV show's rising popularity. The seven episodes unravel a story of a fifteen-year-old who finds herself wrapped in a love triangle with two brothers during the summer at Cousins Beach. Stuck in either Team Conrad or Team Jeremiah, viewers added more fire to the show's popularity. Hearts flew in each audience member as scenes of sweet teen romance were portrayed. Becoming the number one show on Amazon Prime Video in its premiere weekend, the show gave off the perfect summer vibes. Most reviews regarding the series mentioned the strong nostalgic summer feel that was given by the aesthetically ambient summer

beach house and energetic characters. Others connected with the soundtrack, especially due to the inclusion of several Taylor Swift songs.

From the other side of the world, *Extraordinary Attorney Woo* recently dominated Netflix Korea. Once reaching number one on this platform, the drama series soon entered the Top 10 list in the United States. The K-drama follows the life of an attorney with autism spectrum disorder as she faces prejudice at her workplace but continues to grow her career and office romance. Its popularity quickly rose due to the new plot style but also caused debate over whether a lawyer with autism is possible in reality.

Released in theaters, *Minions: The Rise of Gru* made an estimation of over \$125 million domestically during its Fourth of July opening weekend. The animation provided a fresh and lively feel in the movie

theaters for the first time in a while. Gradually, it became the new trend to watch the movie in formal attire. Friend groups soon filled the seats, each one wearing a fancy dress or suit. The majority of the reviews specified the abundant scenarios of laughter and jokes.

Although special records were not broken, one K-drama that seems to be popular, especially in the local area, is *Alchemy of Souls*, featuring Lee Jae-wook and Jung So-min. The fantasy romance plot portrays the happenings of a world where souls can be shifted from one body to another—not to mention the opportunity to live for eternity. Viewers wrap themselves in the stories of the characters who hold great power and “energy.”

With a variety of shows to watch on screen, this summer seems to have been far from boring. But don't stop yet; many more are expected to come.

## Student Reporter

## The Gathering of Music



Jeremiah Chun  
Grade 11  
West Ranch High School

As we all know, COVID has been thwarting all kinds of activities from occurring in person. Whether it was school or sports, most aspects of our daily lives were brought to a halt by COVID, even the ever-vital music industry! Concerts are a huge factor in a musician's career because they are able to showcase their talents and express their skills to other people. COVID shut down all types of facilities, preventing actual concerts from being staged, and instead forced them to go online. Online concerts did not offer the same experience as enjoying live performances alongside a cheering and energetic audience. Now that the number of COVID cases has significantly dropped, Satori Music Festivals was finally able to host a classic music competition over the weekend of July 9-10.

Held at Azusa Pacific University, this contest was one of the largest



Performing a piano piece during the Satori Music Festival was a great experience  
[Source: Author, Jeremiah Chun]

I've attended since the pandemic began, with hundreds of participants from all over California. The competition featured both piano and string instruments, such as violins and cellos. There were also multiple categories for each instrument, subdivided by the genre of the piece as well as pacing. I played a contemporary piano arrangement, *Cat and Mouse*, written by Aaron Copland, a piece known for its rickety time changes

and inconsistency in both keys and patterns. *Cat and Mouse* is a thriller to listen to because it has all kinds of emotions embedded in the piece, from extremely quiet, fluent rhythms to pounding out loud, inharmonious chords. Notes are played from all over the keyboard, with a mostly accelerating tempo. Very much like its title, the piece presents the story of a cat chasing a mouse; whether contact occurs, causing much mayhem, or

the cat contemplating its next fatal move, the composition accurately depicts the comical chase of these animal enemies.

With this piece, I entered two categories, the first of which was qualified solo, a broad division featuring virtually any type of solo piano piece. I also had the opportunity to listen to other people and heard all kinds of songs from different eras, such as the famous *Turkish March*, written by Mozart, or Bach's preludes. I also participated in the American Qualified Entry, which featured not only soloists but duets as well. Overall, the competition was a huge success. It was an amazing experience where musicians could finally physically play together in the aftermath of COVID. After two whole years, it is reassuring to see people gather over the common interest of music once again.

## Student Reporter

## Among the Wildlife in Samcheok's Crystalline Waters



Sean Kim  
Grade 11  
Los Alamitos High School

This summer I traveled to South Korea to visit my friends and family. It had been four years since my last visit, so I wanted this vacation to be full of memories. I hoped to see the beauty of Korea's nature, as I had witnessed its grand malls and skyscrapers in the past. Luckily, my family and I were able to book a hotel at the Sol Beach Resort in Samcheok, a city on the east coast of South Korea known for its coastal attractions, including vast cave systems and turquoise beaches. I was excited to see, with my own eyes, what Samcheok had to offer.

Sol Beach more than satisfied my goal. I had never seen water any clearer or bluer, and it reminded me of Cancun, which has a reputation for its paradise-like appeals. When we arrived at the resort, I was awed by the grandiose landscape uplifting the beach's natural aspects. On the golden

sand, I saw many crabs scuttling about and egrets fishing in the shallows, where many small minnows swam in schools. When I finally swam out, I was extremely shocked. Even one hundred meters from the shore, I could easily see the ocean floor, about five feet down. I waded maybe thirty meters farther, where I couldn't touch the bottom, and swam about the surface, peering into the water like a snorkeler. I saw many animals: the minnows from the shallows, bigger fish around two feet in length, and sea urchins littered the floor. There were floating tufts of gold, sinking slowly down the water as my feet lifted sand from the bottom. Everything completely exceeded my expectations.

When I finally returned to the shore, I witnessed an even more incredible sight: a shark, cutting through the water with its fin upwards, quickly caused murmurs

among the newly-formed crowd. A couple of lifeguards with binoculars assured everyone that dolphins were significantly more common than sharks, but I made sure to stay closer to shore from then on. I learned later the sharks were actually dolphins like the lifeguards said. Once I had built several sandcastles as evidence of my visit, I contently washed off my feet and changed back into my clothes.

After the beach, I took a trek around the resort's nature path. The oaky forest smell characterized the scenery instantly. Evergreen trees, cicadas, and the occasional blue jays starkly contrasted with the crows, squirrels, and mosquitoes back in Orange County, California. Although the sights were second-to-none, the birds' noisy squawking and the insects' incessant buzzing deafened our ears and quickly encouraged us to retreat up to our hotel rooms.



My aunt and cousin admire Samcheok's beautiful ocean  
[Source: Author, Sean Kim]

All in all, I returned home with my wish to see Korea's nature fulfilled. I'll never forget the incredible views I witnessed, particularly the beautiful blue water. I hope Korea's natural beauty will remain pure and shining. I can't wait for my next trip.

Student Reporter

## How “Real” is Social Media?



**Seanna Kim**  
Grade 10  
Granada Hills Charter  
High School



It's quite easy to edit images to look completely different before uploading them onto social media. [Source: Author, Seanna Kim]

While scrolling through social media, have you ever wondered to yourself, “Is this real?” In an age where teenagers live virtually on the internet, this question is crucial in order to understand exactly how social media is changing our lives.

As an avid social media user myself, I am so constantly bombarded with various beauty standards, makeup trends, gym expect-

tations, and perfect relationships that I have begun to use these as my own standards for living. The more I scroll through my friends’ posts or view celebrities’ stories, the more insecure I feel about my own life. Yet, I realized that I have never stopped to question just how real social media is. Is that one couple really happy all the time? Is that what that celebrity’s body really looks like, or is the picture just edited?

In the novel *Trick Mirror*, author Jia Tolentino compared using social media to Erving Goffman’s playacting metaphor: there are stages, and there is an audience. She used this metaphor to imply how our society is obsessed with presenting only the perfect parts of ourselves on social media platforms, even to the point of faking it. For example, there are countless times when celebrities were caught using photoshop in their posts but denied such accusations. Whether it was photoshoping their body, the setting, or an object, it was done with one goal: to look good. The stage — social media — pressures celebrities into looking or acting a certain way to please their audience - their followers - in order to maintain the image they have created. Similarly, makeup companies are often scrutinized for editing the skin and texture of their models to look perfect and even unnatural. Blem-

ishes, acne, and other “imperfections” are deemed unacceptable to promote their products, so they are removed. Social media leads the audience to believe in a false, glorified image of makeup products when in reality, they aren’t as perfect as they seem.

Ultimately, without even realizing it, we have normalized this kind of behavior on social media because of how often it occurs. We have seen the way people across all ages are negatively affected by the insane beauty standards displayed by celebrities and models, and how people compare their relationships to ones they see online — it is truly disheartening. But, I believe that things can change once people understand how much of a fraud social media is. Yes, there are truthful aspects, but when a vast portion of it consists of lies, users must recognize the real from the fake.

Student Reporter

## School Shootings: How Tragedies Transform Society



**Junny Jung**  
Grade 11  
Grover Cleveland Charter  
High School

In a society that is rapidly changing, the norms of how we live our lives have been forever altered with the rise of gun culture in the United States. In just the first six months of 2022, there have been over three hundred mass shootings in the United States alone. This statistic excludes smaller-level scale shootings that happen on a daily basis in dangerous neighborhoods throughout the nation. With little promise of amendments in gun policies happening anytime soon, many remain at unease as the public walks through their daily lives with fear in their hearts. While threats of gun violence exempt no one from anxious anticipation, it is the children who carry the most fear in their hearts.

Countless students have come to accept school shootings as a part of their academic lives. As the cycle of shootings, mourning, and arguing repeats over and over again on a national scale, adoles-



The student residential quarters of CalArts, a campus where students should not have to worry about their safeties being threatened by gun violence. [Source: Author, Junny Jung]

cents have come to terms that this is something that is inevitable and unpreventable. As students have the possibility of such events occurring, schools are now much more prepared for the catastrophes than they were twenty years ago. However, what does it mean as a society if we allow mere students to live in a world where they are constantly on edge of such an event. How will it affect their learning?

A solution to an issue this major and complicated can never be simple. The first large problem enclosed in the topic of mass shootings are gun laws. In a nation that is sharply divided on the issue of gun control, it can seem like any law alterations are not on the horizon of possibilities. However, adding intense background checks and requiring multiple tasks of tests of personality and mental health could

limit the number of citizens who own guns. Another key conflict in mass shootings is mental health. American health care services often overlook mental health as a crucial aspect of one’s well being. This is false, as nearly all perpetrators of this kind of violence suffer in some facets of their mental health. If those who are going through challenges and dealing with feelings of anguish and hatred could be helped, perhaps school shootings would be less common.

Finding an answer for a problem as tragic and emblematic as school shootings can feel hopeless. It is normal to question if positions of power truly have the citizens’ best interest in mind. If people are able to converse and fight for a change during these dire times, the country will slowly transform. However, until then, it is important to stay safe and be aware of your surroundings at all times.

Editors Column

## CSPA Workshop: A Hidden Gem for High School Journalists



**Jonathan Kim**  
Grade 11  
Culver City High School

When I first heard about the California Scholastic Press Association Workshop, I didn’t think too much of it. Unlike other summer journalism programs that I had been recommended to attend, CSPA was largely a mystery to passionate high school journalists like myself. However, I decided to apply anyway, thinking that I’d still be able to gain valuable journalistic skills after having been rejected from the other journalism programs I had applied to.

After having attended the nine-day journalism workshop at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, I can truly say that CSPA was one of the most valuable experiences of my life. The skills and experience I obtained from attending the intensive workshop from July 16th to the 24th are ones that I will forever take with me.

In the nine days, students

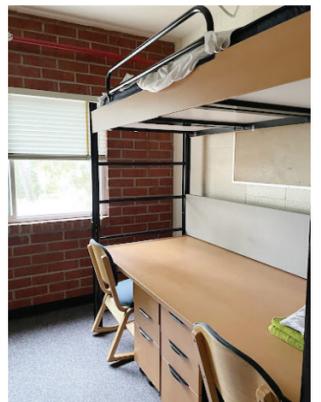
learn how to write stories under strict deadlines and cover a variety of journalistic fields, such as breaking news, opinion writing, feature writing, sportswriting, and business and tech reporting, among others. Students also get an insight into using social media as journalists, TV production, court reporting, and other vital skills. While the workshop is intensive, as there are classes running daily, usually from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m., it is in this compact schedule that the workshop can simulate the real journalism experience for students, who complete an exhausting workload comparable to professional journalists.

The workshop is able to bring the best out of students’ writing and reporting abilities, as they complete 23 assignments over the nine-day workshop. Each of the assignments are graded and students are given valuable feedback by instructors at the camp.

All of the instructors are volunteers teaching during their own free time, and most of them are CSPA alumni who now professionally work as journalists for publications such as the *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, the *L.A. Times*, the *Athletic*, and the *Orange County Register*.

Ultimately, it is passionate instructors like these that have made attending the CSPA workshop a possibility for student-journalists like myself for over 70 years. While I gained valuable journalistic skills in writing, reporting, and some aspects of multimedia, it is the connections that I made at the program with other students and industry professionals that made CSPA a memorable experience.

Regardless of whether one desires to pursue a career in journalism or not, the experiences



During their nine-day stay at the CSPA workshop, students live in Cal Poly San Luis Obispo’s iconic red brick dorms. [Source: Author, Jonathan Kim]

and skills one can obtain while in the program, such as learning to ask difficult questions and write quickly under short, strict deadlines, as well as having to manage an intense workload while in a professional setting, are vital in any environment. However, especially if you are interested in journalism, CSPA is undoubtedly