

Assistant Editors Column

Breaking into Elims at Jack Howe



Sean Kim
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My debate coach, Scott Brown, was a big part of my success! He went for a more casual attire since he wasn't competing. [Source: Author, Sean Kim]

The Jack Howe Memorial Invitational is an annual debate tournament hosted by California State University, CSULB, Long Beach, CSULB, on the last Saturday of September. CSULB gives middle and high school students from all over California a chance to compete in official debate rounds on

the university's campus.

At Jack Howe, I broke into elims and won an award as a double octo-finalist. The tournament was organized into six preliminary rounds, which are guaranteed to every competitor. The officials ranked debaters from their wins and losses and advanced the top sixteen to eliminations, known casually as elims. The phrase "break into elims" means to perform well in the assured preliminaries and move on to the elimination rounds, where pairings are power-matched, and prizes are awarded.

It had been two months since my last award, and I had high hopes for this tournament. The debate topic was whether implementing a single-payer universal health-care system would be in the nation's best interest. I had practiced and researched for nearly three weeks with my coach, and I was

confident in my case. However, I was a bit nervous on the car ride to CSULB. Due to COVID, most tournaments have been online for all of 2021. Jack Howe would be my first in-person debate experience.

My anxiety quickly subsided as I started my first round. I gave my speech just as I had practiced, and the match went as expected. With renewed enthusiasm, I finished the debate and started prepping for the next.

The following five rounds were similar to the first. Some opponents were tough, but I triumphed over most of them. When the results came out, I was ecstatic. I had only lost one round, for a record of five wins and one loss. I had broken into elims, and easily at that.

Elimination rounds are power-matched, meaning competitors with similar records are paired

together. Since I won five of my six preliminary matches, my first elimination round was against a tough opponent who had also won five matches. Aside from prizes, elims were special for another reason: three judges instead of one. There would be absolutely zero bias, and a majority rule would decide the victors.

After a long round and great points on both sides, I lost in the first elimination round by a decision of two to one. I got a shiny plaque for being a double octo-finalist, and my first in-person tournament was officially over. At the end of the day, Jack Howe was a fantastic experience. It was great to finally win an award, but visiting CSULB and being able to debate on campus was a huge plus.

I can't wait for Jack Howe 2023. Maybe next time, I'll win first place!

Student Reporter

Weekend Hikes: A Great Way to Relieve Stress



Theo Lim
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The crisp aroma of the trees fills the air as you walk along the dirt trail. A wide view of the hills can be seen on one side, as the other is full of fresh pine trees. Going on a relaxing hike on the hills is an opportunity to get closer to nature and lets you escape from the busy life as it refreshes you.

I have found countless benefits of hiking, both for my body and mental health. Hiking is a bit more tiring than walking on a flat surface, as it is a combination of both cardiovascular and muscle exercise. Climbing up a steep trail required my body to use a lot of leg muscles, including the quads and hamstrings. However, I found it helpful to train my patience and endurance coming downhill since I had to keep my focus on the uneven trail. Finally, the beautiful scenery and the silence of nature really cleansed my mind, helping me relieve any kind of stress.



The beautiful sunset is seen from the Glendale Sports Complex hiking trail. [Source: Author, Theo Lim]

A variety of hiking trails exist around us, whether they are distant or near. Even if you have no advanced information on finding trails, there are simple ways to look for them. The most simple is to use the internet and search for hiking trails near you. Through maps to guides and reviews, the internet can provide more than enough information about the course. Other

than that, if you have any connections with people who hike, ask them for information, as they can also share their own tips. In addition, a lot of trails have a wide range of difficulty and types, so it is best to be prepared according to it before heading out.

Personally, I use several ways to check the progress of my hikes. I

found the app Strava the most convenient, but there are tons of other options that can be used, such as the pre-installed health application on your phone. These applications help keep track of your hikes and statistics, such as your speed, calories, time, and elevation. The saved activity can be shared on your profile and communities, also giving you a chance to connect with new people.

Lastly, it is very important to check for your safety when hiking. Know your body's condition or any health issues you may have, and prepare for it as needed. I do not recommend using earbuds, as they can distract you from the trail and may cause you to lose focus, which can cause major accidents. Wear appropriate clothing according to the weather, and in case of emergency, keep a fully charged cell phone on you to use at any time. If all of the above are checked, you are good to go and enjoy the fun hike.

Student Reporter

Vote 16 Culver City - Creating Change One Vote At a Time



Jonathan Kim
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Since Takoma Park, Maryland, made history in 2013 by becoming the first city in the country to give 16-year-olds the right to vote, and multiple cities have followed; Hyattsville and Greenbelt in Maryland, as well as Berkeley and Oakland in California, just to name a few. And now, Culver City may be next. Since being established in 2018, the Vote 16 club at Culver City High School has worked to build support for lowering the voting age to 16 in Culver City elections. And four years later, their efforts may soon be rewarded.

Culver City voters will officially vote in the Nov. 8 election on Measure VY, which, if adopted, would allow 16 and 17-year-olds to vote on ballot measures and City and School District candidates in future elections.

Vote 16 is run by Co-Presidents Ada Meighan-Thiel and Ava Frans, both of whom have been involved in the club since their freshman years in 2019. Through their ongoing mission to lower the voting age to 16 in Culver City elections, they hope to

create "a generation of habitual voters." "We believe that by lowering the voting age, values of democratic participation will be instilled in our youth from a young age," Meighan-Thiel said. "It's not just about how they're voting as 16 and 17-year-olds, but also how they're voting as adults and more active and engaged members of our society."

The goal to get Measure VY on the Nov. 8 ballot has been a long time coming. In late March of 2020, Culver City Council was initially scheduled to vote on the ballot measure, which, if approved, would have placed it on the ballot. However, as the pandemic hit two weeks before the vote, the process was delayed, taking another two years before the measure would be re-approved for a City Council vote.

But since officially being approved for the upcoming election, Vote 16 has hit the ground running on campaigning for Yes on Measure VY. The club canvasses three times a week, which involves directly knocking on doors to spread the word about the measure. Vote 16



Vote 16 Culver City held a joint fundraiser with Culver City School Board Candidate Triston Ezidore on September 10, 2022, to support Measure VY. [Source: Vote 16 Culver City]

is offering volunteer hours for any student interested in participating, regardless of experience. "It's quite easy once you get the hang of it, and we'd love to have any student that wants to commit a couple of hours of their weekend to help spread the word," Frans said.

Vote 16 has also held voter registration drives and holds a forum annually with KidScoop Media to interview city council and school board members on local issues. All of these efforts have not only helped

in their goal to campaign for Measure VY, but also "enfranchise people and spread voting rights and civic engagement," Frans said.

And with election day less than a month away, Meighan-Thiel and Frans stress the importance of voting Yes on Measure VY. "I think Culver City has a really unique opportunity to become a national leader in youth civic engagement," Meighan-Thiel said. "We hope that by voting yes on Measure VY on November 8, we will do just that."

Student Reporter



Jiseong Yoo
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Sunnyhills High School

Candy or Drugs? Don't Take the Chance



We all love candy, whether we are 5 or 50. However, what if just one candy could potentially kill you?
[Source: Author, Jiseong Yoo]

As the season of candy comes around, mobs of people will buy and eat candy. Most of these sweet and inexpensive treats are mainly consumed by kids, but what if these candies weren't really candy but a substance that could kill people? Recent activities, mainly from China and Mexico, are producing

huge amounts of "Rainbow fentanyl," drugs that are disguised as candy. The CDC, Centers for Disease Control reports that these drugs are causing hundreds and thousands of lives to be taken. As candies will be popular, it is important for everyone to be aware that these exist.

Fentanyl, a drug 50 times deadlier than heroin, is being placed into unrecognizable candies, then sold to people, killing thousands. Former ICE special agent Victor Avila stated that fentanyl is so addictive that you don't even have to take the drug to feel the effects. According to the CDC, deaths have increased dramatically, with over 100,000 deaths in just one year. What's more is that these deadly drugs are being disguised as candy, attracting teens and kids. The drugs sold at local stores and gas stations look no different than your average

skittles or mints. Although these "rainbow fentanyl" products aren't meant to be sold to kids, innocent ones not knowing what the candy-shaped drug is may pick it up from a nearby table or shelf and potentially overdose. In a recent event at Troy High School in Fullerton, California, a 17-year-old accidentally overdosed at a party on fentanyl and, unfortunately, passed away.

One time, I had an experience when a random student came up to me and asked if I wanted some candy. I didn't think of it much at the time and just took it. However, now that I look back at the incident, innocently taking the candy could have been bad and potentially killed me. Kids and teens, and even adults, might not know the difference between candy and drugs. The fact that these drugs look so similar to candies makes them seem okay

to eat, but with one piece of rainbow fentanyl, anyone can potentially get killed. One way to prevent these drugs from hurting us is to make sure you don't buy legal drugs online because those drugs might not be prescribed by doctors. In addition, we can also help those around us by informing our friends not to take candies or other sweets from others, especially if it is someone they don't know.

Of course, we can't prevent all the deaths from happening because of rainbow fentanyl or prevent the drug dealers from selling them. However, we can spread awareness to others by notifying them to take precautions when buying things and not taking things from strangers. In the end, we can't stop these drugs from being made or sold, but we can still try to lessen the impact and lessen the deaths caused by them.

Student Reporter

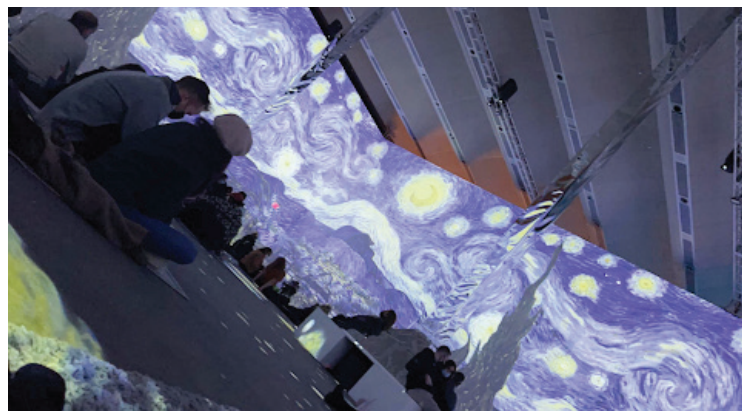


Katherine Cha
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Everyone Should Experience an Immersive Art Museum

The lights were off, and the entire room was blocked from any source of natural light. Though it was morning, it felt like the sun had already set, as if the world was asleep. I had just stepped into an immersive art museum.

Immersive art museums are a completely new take on the presentation of art, having digital projections of the works moving on the walls and allowing one to watch the scene unfold right before their eyes. They utilize movement, sound, and also contrast with different types of lighting in order to further enhance the viewer's experience. Watching the art unfold before one's eyes is something that can't be easily gotten from other traditional museums. I discovered this type of museum right at the peak of the COVID quarantine when people were not allowed to leave the house and go anywhere public. To me, that was devastating. My



Immersive art inside the Van Gogh Exposition was an amazing thing to experience.
[Source: Author, Katherine Cha]

fascination with immersive art museums grew and grew, and I only wanted two things during that time: to go hang out with my friends again and to go to an immersive art museum.

In January 2022, I was finally able to go to one of these museums. I talked my parents into taking me to the Van Gogh Exposition, which featured a variety of his works, a virtual reality experience, and a room with immersive art. I never thought I would be

able to see Starry Night surrounding me on the walls and the floor; the experience was breathtaking. The stars twisted and swirled, and each of the brush strokes inched its way from one end of the wall to the other.

After that, I had to continue my museum adventure. Not going to another immersive art museum just was not an option. Recently, I went to Hall des Lumieres with my friend, an exhibition that had just recently opened. Here, they were

featuring art by Gustav Klimt, an artist whom I didn't have much of a taste for. However, that didn't matter at all. To me, the fact that it was an immersive art museum was more than enough.

We sat for hours, just staring at the scenes that were fading in and out of each other. Scenes of the buildings of New York City, paintings from Klimt, and depictions of the dynamics between women and men were beautifully illustrated. And even more, there was music! It surrounded us, the speakers seemingly built into every corner of the hall, which amplified the experience in a way that wouldn't have been possible otherwise.

This new form of art is something that is truly modern, combining art and technology to create new and exciting media. All I hope for now is to experience Artechouse, one of the main immersive art museums in New York.

Student Reporter



Michelle Park
Grade 11
Granada Hills Charter High School

Music Therapy 101

Music is not only for singing and belting out lyrics with your friends; many benefits come with listening to music. Some people say you can "keep your brain young" with music, as it stimulates the brain and provides it with a workout. There have been countless research studies that show that listening to music can reduce anxiety, pain, and blood pressure, and enhance memory, sleep quality, and mood, among others. Listening to music is seen to be so effective that there is an established health profession called music therapy.

According to UCLA Health, music therapy "uses music-based interventions to address a person's cognitive, social, emotional, psychological, physical, physiological, and spiritual needs." Music therapy can be beneficial to individuals of all ages and can

also target emotional distress in whole families rather than just individual people. This is an alternative method to improve communication, social skills, and emotional processing. There are many different kinds of music therapy, including playing music for personal benefit, making music, or listening to music played by someone else.

One club called Music for Sharing, at Granada Hills Charter High School, is a chapter of the Music for Sharing mother organization. I was able to interview the president of the club, Aaron Han. Aaron stated that Music for Sharing is an organization that aims to provide music through healing. Students gather together to use their talents for a good cause. "I started this club to engage people with music therapy as well as to give relief to those struggling



Learning how to make music with Jonathan Legaspi at a recent Music for Sharing workshop.
[Source: Michelle Park]

from day-to-day stress", Aaron said. In the future, Aaron wants to perform in front of crowds, such as in senior centers, along with the members, and create fundraisers to gather donations to help support the club and the cause. In a recent workshop, a guest speaker, Jonathan Legaspi introduced the process of writing music. Aaron plans to continue this workshop

for the next several weeks.

Music is a universal form of communication, and many find healing and comfort in listening to it. For some, it gives a sense of purpose, and for others, it is a tool to help cope with struggles. The next time you're feeling sad, happy, angry, or any other emotion, try listening, playing, or even making music.