

## Student Reporter

## Earth's SOS: My Love Letter to the Environment



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The most heavily polluted cities in the world tend to have more orange and red sunsets due to an abundance of human-emitted greenhouse gases. [Source: Author, Catherine Han]

I believe everyone has a “Eureka!” moment at least once in their lives. Mine hit me during a GRIT talk at a summer research program held at UC Santa Barbara. The speaker presented on fossil fuel use in industries and how that encouraged further climate change, projecting a somber and sobering mood over the crowd in the theater. It was when she was discussing the potential consequences of continuing to use fossil fuels that the metaphorical lightbulb hovering above my head flicked its

switch. Maybe the urgency of environmental issues had finally set in, or the building realization that this problem was something I had completely overlooked. But among the many students sitting in that dimmed theater, my epiphany was inevitably hurtling down my headspace like an asteroid. Seated beside me, my roommate was blissfully asleep on my shoulder.

Coming back to school, I looked forward to learning about environ-

mental science in class. After my “Eureka!” crisis back in the theater, I was motivated to self-educate about climate change through the internet. It was like learning about a whole other world that had coexisted alongside mine, and they were colliding for the first time. Did you know that the major contributor to climate change is our dependence on fossil fuels? One reason is that the greenhouse gases that we emit from burning them stay trapped in the atmosphere, increasing global warming. The heat melts the glaciers in Greenland, raising the global ocean levels and flooding coastal areas. The carbon dioxide gasses that are absorbed into the ocean intensify ocean acidification. Humanity has stripped down forests, polluted the ocean, and casually cut down on biodiversity.

The overlapping consequences are not only destructive but saddening. Within a semester, I saw

Earth dying in front of my eyes. In a documentary, I watched how underwater photographers endeavored to capture time-lapses of coral reefs bleaching white. But it was heartbreaking to see the coral that they loved gradually die and rot. The diver in the documentary sat on the boat after his rounds, head held low in his hands. And there are more stories like this, some even more depressing. Climate change has already started, and in some aspects, it's already done its damage. When I see hurricanes tearing apart people and buildings alike, floods drowning towns, intense heat sticking people to the melting asphalt, and desolate, ugly landscapes that used to be something breathtakingly beautiful, it's crushingly easy to lose myself to despair. But right now, the world is holding its breath. How we take action right now will decide what path climate change will take, for better or worse. So don't lose hope, and have faith in what you can do.

## Student Reporter

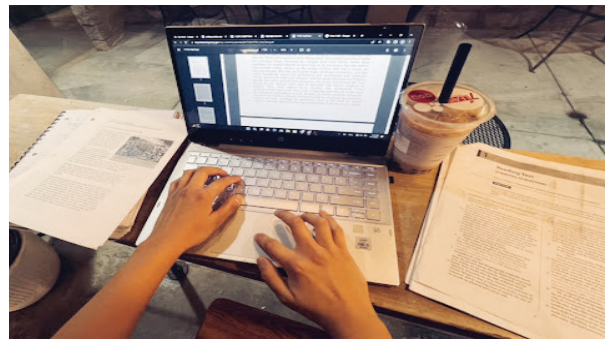
## Utilizing Your Environment to Avoid One of THOSE Nights



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A combination of the terms, “prioritization, distraction, and delay,” might seem irregular; to a majority of working individuals. However, these words may entail a sense of guilt or dread. More specifically, students who procrastinate will recognize that these subjects are strongly associated with staying up late to race against a deadline.

The issue of procrastination presents a trojan horse to some high school students, as the simple solution of prioritizing schedules or eliminating distractions is not so easy in practice. While interviewing friends and students who have experienced these issues, a conspicuous pattern was present: there were many reports of “absent-mindedness” and “devices” being the main distraction. Despite reappearing warning signs, these individuals have often found procrastination to be unavoidable without a preliminary procedure or mindset. One of the interviewed friends, Julie Choi, has even accounted that, “I feel



Tea shops and coffee houses remain a popular location for studying due to their tranquil atmosphere. [Source: Julie Choi]

like all the objects around me are a reminder of activities unrelated to school. It's really discouraging.” As technological advances have come further, these distractions have become more accessible. After further inspection, it has become evident that one's environment is a huge factor in determining productivity.

Taking this detail in mind, there should be a change in preparation for your future study sessions. More specifically, you should study in different workplaces. Although one's room is a common place to

work, certain objects or decorations could break a professional atmosphere. While a living room couch is a viable option, public areas are popular alternatives to the average workplace. It is significant that one should enhance their performance during these sessions, so libraries or coffee shops filled with individuals of the same academic interest would provide the ideal atmosphere.

Furthermore, making an appropriate work environment is not limited to picking one of these settings, as keeping refreshments

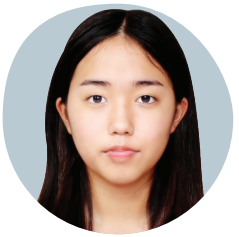
nearby will prolong your concentration and seemingly enhance the quality of your surroundings. It's not difficult to imagine that a cold drink can stimulate a discouraged scholar's senses after they've been working for a while. Instead of sinking into an office chair once you've consecutively worked for 30 minutes, you could be enjoying a cold fruit juice or an iced latte to prepare for the assignments ahead of you.

Although some features are absent, implementing these things first is crucial in fostering an effective workplace. Oftentimes, additional factors like music can leave one attached to their devices if not properly carried out.

Over time, exercising this strategy will make most of the indulgent habits diminish and enhance the illusion of finishing any pre-study rituals. For those who believe that these issues are prevalent, self-improvement is always around the corner!

## Student Reporter

## Harry Styles: A Pop Sensation



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From working at a bakery to obtaining nearly 50 million followers, Harry Styles has certainly been on a wild journey. Most people know him for his hit songs “Watermelon Sugar” and “As It Was,” or for being in the world-famous boyband One Direction.

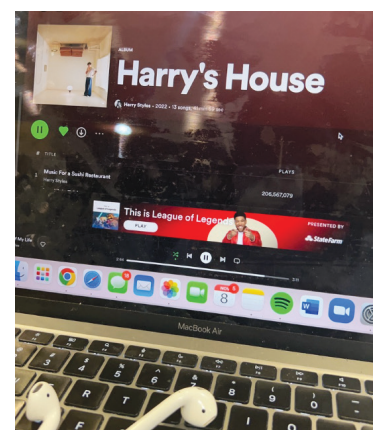
Harry Edward Styles was born February 1, 1994, in Worcestershire, an area in the West Midlands of England. His parents are Anne Twist and Desmond Styles, but unfortunately, they divorced when Harry was seven years old. Harry has an older sister named Gemma, who is older by three years. Harry and Gemma lived with their mother after the divorce, and his mother eventually remarried. Harry's singing career began at the Holmes Chapel Comprehensive school, where he formed a band named White Eskimo with his friends. As a part-time job, Harry worked at the Mandeville Bakery.

When Harry was 16 years old,

in 2010, he took part in The X Factor and sang “Isn't She Lovely” by Stevie Wonder. Harry was eliminated before the finals, but the judges combined him with other competitors, Niall Horan, Liam Payne, Louis Tomlinson, and Zayn Malik, to form a group for the rest of the competition. They all formed a band named One Direction, which later became one of the most popular competitors in the show. They did not end up winning X Factor but were signed by the Syco music label. Harry was the youngest member of the band and was quickly loved by fans. In November of 2011, One Direction released their debut album, Up All Night. It was a bestseller around the world, and the band even got to perform at the Olympics in 2012. One Direction continued to have success with other albums, but unfortunately, in March 2015, Zayn Malik left his bandmates. Later that year, One Direction announced their hiatus. Since then, they have not returned.

After One Direction broke up, Harry went on to pursue an acting and singing career. Harry announced his first song, Sign of the Times. Not long after, his first album, Harry Styles, was released. The album was a hit and now has nearly 90 million streams. Harry also made his movie debut in a war thriller, Dunkirk. In 2019, another album, Fine Line, was released. One of the songs, Watermelon Sugar, made the No. 1 on the Billboard charts. In the same year, he acquired three Grammy nominations. The Grammy's were delayed due to Covid 19, but Harry eventually won his first Grammy for Best Pop Solo Performance.

In May of 2022, Harry announced his third album, Harry's House. Immediately upon release, this album was loved by fans. The song “As It Was” broke many records. For example, it was the most streamed song on Spotify for 24 hours for a male artist. Other songs such as “Late Night Talking,” “Ma-



The album Harry's House on Spotify. [Source: Author, Emily Byun]

tilda,” and “Little Freak” quickly became fan favorites.

Currently, Harry is on a concert tour around the world. He has already toured Europe and is touring the United States. However, he will return to Europe again in the new year. Harry Styles has had an immense influence in the music industry. His accomplishments have proved his talent, but many more are yet to come.

Student Reporter



Angel Song

Grade 8

Walter Reed Middle School

## Resurfacing In-Person Speech and Debate Tournaments



Jefferson Middle School, where the in-person SCJFL Wolpert-Gawron Invitational Tournament was held on 10/21/22

[Source: Author, Angel Song]

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, many in-person events have been canceled or shifted to being held online, including speech and debate tournaments. However, tournaments have begun to operate in person again as the pandemic is starting to phase out.

Speech and debate is a popular extracurricular activity for students talented at speaking and performing. The activity is divided into two categories: speech and debate. Speech events typically consist of speeches with scripts that require some level of emotion and

performance, especially in interpretation events. On the contrary, there are other speech events, such as extemporaneous speaking, which is the primary research and analysis of current events. Well-known speech events include informative speaking, storytelling, and impromptu. Regarding debate events, these are more argumentative rather than an interpretation. Competitors are given the topics to debate in many forms, from debating one person to two people at once. Some well-known debate events are spontaneous argumentation (SpAr), public forum, and Lincoln Douglas.

Previously, online tournaments were held over speech and debate platforms, including Tabroom and Forensicstournament.net. For tournaments held over Tabroom, participants would use the NSDA Campus program built inside every Tabroom tournament, and other tournaments, usually held over Forensicstournament.net, would utilize 8x8, a third-party video calling service, contrary to the standard belief tournaments would likely use Zoom, another well-known video calling service which became popular during the pandemic.

Slowly, in-person speech and debate tournaments are starting to reappear. Since the pandemic, most tournaments have been held online for public health concerns and the comfort of competitors and officials. Although many speech and debate organizations still choose to hold online tournaments, some are choosing to value live performances over accessibility and comfort. As a result, many prestigious tourna-

ments will be held in person this year, including the annual National Speech and Debate Association (NSDA) speech and debate tournament.

Some benefits of online tournaments are not only the cost but that many people from across the nation can participate. As in-person tournaments are not easily accessible to people from out of state or even in another part of the state, online tournaments have relatively increased compared to in-person tournaments. However, those held in person have their own benefits as well. For instance, the sensation of seeing a performance live is different from staring at a computer screen. Computers may not always be able to capture hand gestures, expressions, and enunciations. As speech and debate events value the speaker's performance and content, live performances are preferable for both judges and competitors. Having live tournaments has been the tradition of speech and debate tournaments, and now it is time to return.

Student Reporter



Jeremiah Chun

Grade 11

West Ranch High School

## The Beach Blitz

The future has always been a fascinating and inspiring thing to think about. Being so unpredictable, the future holds things that we can never imagine in the present. Everywhere we go, technology is somehow present in society, even in underprivileged countries. It is only a matter of time before computers will be accessible everywhere in the world. A huge part of this technology is the increasing presence of robots in our daily lives. From Amazon's Alexa to performance bot servers in restaurants, robots are a fascinating subject to watch and analyze. As part of Project 691 Robotics, I saw the true sophistication of today's robots in the Beach Blitz pre-season competition.

Taking place on Saturday, November 5, the Beach Blitz Competition is an annual fall event where teams from all over California come to Capistrano Valley High School gymnasium and participate in a complex game. There were a total of 42 teams participating in this



The general look of the field during Beach Blitz

[Source: Author, Jeremiah Chun]

tournament, and there was a wide range of members on each team (from 10 to 50). There were all kinds of robots presented, each composed of different materials and designed in different shapes. All of the robots participated in one game during the event featuring three phases: autonomous, player-driven, and endgame.

A single match lasts only two minutes and thirty seconds, but during this short time, so many things happen at once. The field consists of six robots split into two teams of three. In the center of the field, there are two levels of giant

hoops – a lower level with a big hoop, and an upper level with a smaller, conic hoop. The autonomous phase features the robots themselves with no human support. During this 15-second phase, robots launch balls from their systems and try to score as many points as possible. The lower level rewards two points, and the upper level four points per ball scored.

The second phase is the player-driven phase, where human players control the robots' movements and actions. This allows the robots to score hoops much faster, since the players do not have to hard-

code what the robot must do by themselves. The players have the freedom to do whatever they want, scoring as many baskets as possible with their robot or defending the hoop by blocking other robots from doing so. Here, the upper level racks up two points while the lower hoop scores one. The last phase is the endgame, a thirty-second round wherein capable robots have the option to complete a unique task: climb elevated monkey-bar-like poles. The poles are located on the corners of the field, with higher poles rewarding more points. Robots ideally use two sets of arms to climb each pole, with the vertical height and horizontal distance between each rung increasing with every pole. It was intense, edge-of-your-seat suspense as the final few bots successfully scaled the 15+ foot championship pole. Overall, this competition was a great opportunity for me to see how robotics teams apply their engineering knowledge, an inspiring afternoon of watching such beautiful pieces of machinery in action.

Student Reporter



Rubie Choi

Grade 11

Torrance High School

## Torrance High School 2022 Homecoming

Homecoming is an annual dance that is held the day after the homecoming football game. It is an event in which school alumni, students, and friends gather together to socialize, dance, and take pictures. Attendees are expected to dress up formally in dresses or suits. This year, Torrance High School had its homecoming on October 22, 2022. The theme of this year's dance was Tangled. The school and the gymnasium were decorated with objects, symbols, and colors that came out of Tangled, such as the Sun, lanterns, and purple banners.

Every high school has its own way of celebrating its homecoming tradition. Torrance High School had its students dressed up each day of the week of homecoming to show their school spirit. On Mon-

day, the theme was "When Will My Life Begin," which referred to the song sung in the Disney movie, Rapunzel. Students, on this day, dressed up as their younger-self. On Tuesday, the theme was "I've Got a Dream," which was also referring to a song in Rapunzel. Students dressed up in their dream college gear or dream profession for this day. On Wednesday, the theme was "Torrance Knows Best," which alludes to Mother Gothel's song in the same movie. Students dressed up in maroon and gray, which are Torrance High School's school colors. On Thursday, the theme was "Little Miss Locked in a Tower." Thursday's theme was related to the infamous "Little Miss..." slogans in which students came up with their own slogan. Lastly, on Friday, the theme was "Pascal's favorite class color."



At the gymnasium, there was a live DJ who played music for the students to dance and enjoy their evening.

[Source: Author, Rubie Choi]

Students dressed up in their class colors: Seniors wore yellow, juniors wore red, sophomores wore green, and freshmen wore blue. Also, on Friday, a class competition was held at the gymnasium where all the grades competed with each other on fun trivial games. The class competition also showcased a performance from Torrance High School's Cheer and Drill teams

and the Seniors who were voted top 30. Among the top 30, the top 2 are crowned Queen and King. The end of the annual tradition was marked with the Homecoming dance held at the school's gymnasium.

The Homecoming tradition is definitely an experience every high schooler should be able to encounter!