

Student Reporter



Ethan Chang
Grade 11
Stockdale High School

Kern County Academic Decathlon Competition



The first-place trophy for the winning school at the awards ceremony. [Source: Author, Ethan Chang]

Following two school years of social distancing, the 40th annual Kern County Academic Decathlon returned to in-person competitions this year. The academic decathlon is made up of ten subjects, including art, economics, essay, interview, language and literature, mathematics, music, science, social science, and speech,

along with a Super Quiz. This year's theme was the American Revolution and the New Nation; the art curriculum explored early American art; The economics curriculum contained a thematic section on colonial and early American economic history; the music curriculum covered an introduction to early American music; the science topic included discussions on significant advancements made in chemistry during the last half of the eighteenth century and the early nineteenth century; and the social science topic introduced the American Revolution and the founding of the United States of America.

Each school's team consists of nine students based on grade point average: three "A" students in Honor Division, three "B" students in Scholastic Division, and three "C" students in Varsity Division. These nine high school

students demonstrate knowledge and skill in each subject individually, and their scores are added together to compete amongst the opponents.

Last week, several schools in the Kern High School District completed the competition. For two past consecutive years, individual tests were all virtual competitions, and the Super Quiz was canceled due to Covid. This year, although they continued the online competition for individual subjects, competitors all met together in a large quiz bowl called a Super Quiz on the last day of the competition. Team members have ten seconds to collaborate and answer each question. It took place at Stockdale High School, and the awards ceremony followed afterward. One of the organizers of the Academic Decathlon competition, Mrs. Gaby Scully, stated that "Once the social distancing had largely been wind-

ed down, we decided to do a Super Quiz in person again."

The schools that participated in the Kern County Academic Decathlon include Arvin High, Frontier High, Independence High, Stockdale High, and West High. Stockdale received first place, followed by Frontier receiving second, Arvin being third, Independence being fourth, and West receiving fifth. The students with individual top scores in each subject and in each division received recognition and medals at the awards ceremony. The school that wins the competition receives a trophy for its accomplishment and is qualified to participate in the California Academic Decathlon, scheduled for next month in Santa Clara. The winning school of California's Academic Decathlon will move up to the national competition, the United States Academic Decathlon Nationals, in April in Texas.

Student Reporter



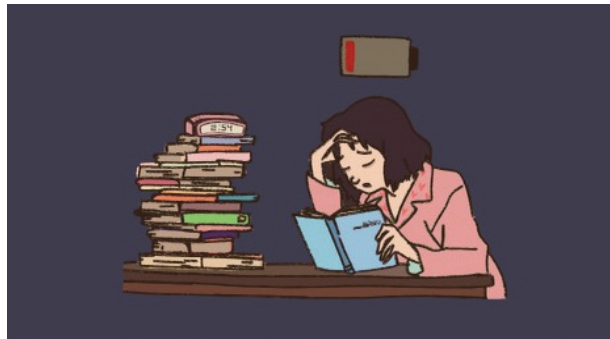
Alexis Choi
Grade 10
South High School

Surviving Second Semester

There is a specific point in the school year, which normally begins in February, when students start to lose steam. With a fresh school semester where everything resets, on top of winter break being over and spring break still a little too far away, many students find themselves facing heightened stress and even signs of burnout.

Despite being frequently downplayed as a simple extension of stress, burnout is a serious condition that can severely damage a person's emotional, mental, and physical health. Symptoms range from simply feeling overwhelmed to a loss of motivation, extreme exhaustion, and depression. Students can forget their interests and motives and spend the remainder of the year in a hopeless, sluggish state.

However, students often get the same advice from others and the internet: "Journal every night," "Change your diet," or "regularly practice meditation, breathing exercises, or mindfulness to find peace in your current life!" These types of tips can be helpful when done properly, but most are simply



Students can combat stress and burnout with reorganization and changes in schedule to accommodate their main goals! [Source: Author, Alexis Choi]

unrealistic for students to carry out every day. Instead, here are some more practical behaviors students can adopt in order to stay strong throughout these middle months.

Even if you are suffering, having someone beside you who is also experiencing the same thing can dull the pain. Friends and a strong support system can make the horrors of school more bearable. Having someone to listen to your stresses and worries, motivate you, and accompany you throughout the journey can be mentally and emotionally beneficial.

Another crucial tip to surviving the rest of the year is to get more

sleep. It may seem obvious, but sleep and burnout go hand in hand. Getting less sleep is something most people do when they are feeling stressed and overwhelmed. This leads to constant exhaustion, less emotional stability, decreased brain function, and other mental and physical harms. Although eight hours a night seems impossible, getting more than three or four is essential to keeping stress at bay. Learning to take power naps throughout the day can also help boost energy.

Lastly, one of the most important factors, although it may sound counter-intuitive, is to learn how to give up. When beginning one's sec-

ond semester, many students find a lack of time as one of the main reasons for their stress. With extracurriculars, grades to maintain, and even AP exams for some—there is so much to do. Here, students need to consider their situation harshly. Rather than trying to juggle a million extracurriculars, school activities, and academic responsibilities, it helps to clearly identify those which are the most important. It can be more beneficial to focus on these while bravely giving up other things that are a distraction or simply take up too much time in comparison to their value. Having less on their plate can help students perform better in those more important specific areas.

Although stress and constant pressure are common negative aspects of being a student, it is more important, in the long run, to identify these feelings and focus on resolving them before they begin to significantly impact one's relationships, health, happiness, and grades. Through these tips, it may be easier to make the home stretch and greet summer break with a smile!

Student Reporter



Rachel Chung
Grade 10
Archer School for Girls

Taylor Swift: A Global Icon

Taylor Swift is one of the most influential artists and activists in our world today. She writes songs about love, loss, happiness, and all the human emotions in between. The realism of the way she writes her songs is what intrigues listeners like me.

Taylor Swift has a gift of storytelling, whether through the lyrics or through the music in the background of the song. Since her debut as a young music artist, she has shed light on normal human emotions and experiences while embracing the discomfort that comes from speaking about the emotional impact certain subjects have. In some of her songs, she sings about gender discrimination, bullying, and grief, and

she presents a positive way of acknowledging and dealing with problems. Her poetic writing works hand-in-hand with this to speak to any and all of her listeners. Examples of this deep, emotional writing are noticed more in her recent albums, folklore and evermore, even though this type of writing was also present in her previous albums.

With every song Swift writes, it is thoughtfully done with sophistication and understanding. For example, her song "This is me trying" from folklore describes the feeling of taking three steps back from where you were before and the acceptance that sometimes there is no way to move

forward. She is able to apply the same thoughtfulness to songs of other stories that she tells. She is open about her insecurities and tells stories of the lives that may be glossed over in our society today. All of her fans can agree that she normalizes different feelings in different stages of your life.

Originally, many people focus on Swift's relationships as the heart of all of her songs. However, every single song gives a different narrative. She has a song for each emotion that she has gone through herself. Especially since she grew up making music, we, as the listeners, can see her change in emotional depth from when she was just 16 to now, at 33. As



The vinyl record of Taylor Swift's most recent album, Midnights comes out 17 years after her debut album. [Source: Author, Rachel Chung]

her music themes change, Swift also revises herself, and her fans change and grow with her. Her impact through music will last for generations to come.

Student Reporter

Teen's Pick M3GAN!



Summer Park
Grade 8
Harvard-Westlake School



A fun night out at a movie theater for teenagers
[Source: Author, Summer Park]

Good Afternoon. I hope your day has been going well. This is Summer Park reporting live from the AMC Theaters at Century City Westfield Mall, Los Angeles, California. Today I came to the theater to watch a very popular movie, M3GAN, with my friend. M3GAN is rated PG-13, and the genre is Horror and Science Fic-

tion. This film has become very popular recently among teenagers.

The movie begins with Cady, an average girl going on a family trip with her parents until a deadly accident leaves her as an orphan. The suspense begins as Cady moves in with her eccentric,

roboticist aunt.

Before the movie started, I interviewed a couple of teenagers, asking, "Why are you here today?" and "Why do you want to watch M3GAN?" Mattea, a 13-year-old teenager, replied, "I wanted to spend time with my friend, and we heard a lot about M3GAN through our friends and social media. In particular, Tiktok has featured snippets of the trailers, which got me interested. My volleyball teammates would talk about it as well, so it piqued my interest. I am looking forward to watching the movie and can't wait for the suspense."

The movie has done a good job with marketing. You can find bus stop movie posters and billboards featuring the freaky AI doll. Some adults say it reminds them of Chucky, a popular American

horror series character from the 80s, who is also a killer doll. One TMZ article titled M3GAN Becoming Internet's New Favorite Killer Doll Over Chucky highlights a debate over which killer doll is best, with the release of 'm3GAN' and Chucky. Which doll is your favorite killer doll?

After the movie ended, I interviewed a few seventh graders on how they felt about the movie; What did you think about the movie? Would you recommend it to your friend? One responded that they didn't expect the movie to be so funny. While there were scary parts that got them jumpy, they also enjoyed laughing in several scenes, an unexpected pleasant surprise.

You and your friends should think about hopping into the trends and watch the most talked about movie, M3GAN!

Student Reporter

Race at Lake Perris Launches the 2023 Season of SoCal MTB League



Theo Lim
Grade 9
Crescenta Valley High School

As the countdown goes off, a large group of high school bikers sprint furiously on their bikes. Riders hammered their pedals as they went on a 12-mile race full of climbing and intense obstacles. Hundreds cheer and show support for their team and the racers. Our first race at Lake Perris marked a successful launch of the 2023 season of the SoCal mountain biking league.



The beginning section of the race had riders determined and ready to go.
[Source: Author, Theo Lim]

A day prior to the race, the Crescenta Valley High School Mountain Bike Team gathered at Lake Perris in order to go on a practice ride. During the first lap, coaches gave tips and advice helpful for the race and familiarized the team with the trail. We were grouped by our grades on our second lap, which allowed us to find an efficient pace to sustain ourselves in the final race. Personally, I found the pre-race

ride very helpful, as it was my first time racing.

It was very crucial to be physically and mentally ready for the race. During the week when the race took place, it was mostly about keeping the muscles warmed up through light exercise. On the other hand, the week before the race focused on

achieving a significant amount of muscle and cardiovascular strength through intense, advanced rides. Nutrition had to be supplied through healthy food, and getting enough sleep was also important since it determined the athlete's condition.

Finally, race day arrived. We

kept ourselves hydrated and ready for the big event. Everyone changed into the newly received racing kits. The head coach gave us a quick speech, and we were guided to the final warm-up ride. The warm-ups included a balanced amount of riding uphill, downhill, and flat ground, which had the riders fully ready to go. As the race began, riders started a continuous pedaling to a rolling start, where at a particular point, they transitioned to sprinting. The first few miles were mostly climbing uphills, whereas the other was a mixture of downhills and flats.

Overall, the race at Lake Perris was a great way to start off the new season, as it was a perfect trail to begin with. Now that I know my skill level, I will dedicate my training to surpass the limits in the next race and more to come.

Student Reporter

JY Park Gets His Groove Back with Fans



Tyler Park
Grade 10
Harvard-Westlake School

Amidst fans spanning all ages, backgrounds, and races with his talented group of instrumental musicians, vocalists, and dancers, JY Park got his groove back and soaked up the LA love in a 2-hour Groove Back concert at the historic Wiltern Theater. JY Park, musicians, and the crowd in unison chanted the lyrics to his song, Groove Back:

Let Me Open Your Eyes
And Let You Feel this Groove I Have for You
Gotta Get, GOTTA GET, Gotta Get that Groove Back

Born Park Jin-young, JY Park, is a singer, songwriter, record producer, and reality tv judge to boot. This South Korean entertainer could be identified as a leading pioneer of the globally popular K-pop industry as we know it today. He founded an entertainment agency called JYP Entertainment which has produced and managed successful groups such as G.O.D, Rain, Wonder Girls,

and Miss-A, among many others.

JY Park directed his affection for the Los Angelenos, mentioning, "I have always wanted to perform at the Wiltern Theater located at the heart of Koreatown." The diverse fan base cheered energetically throughout the night. One Korean-American female fan in her 40s walked down memory lane as some of the songs brought back fond memories of her 20s. Meanwhile, just next to this lady, was a group of three non-Korean American friends in their 20s who came because they were fans of his reality TV shows. JY Park mesmerized and captivated this diverse audience with his perfect English as he frequently interacted with the audience.

His charisma, humor, dancing skills, and vocal talent were on full display. He sang and performed his own creative interpretations of songs like Bruno Mar's "Uptown Funk," Elvis Presley's rock, Wonder



JY Park gets his Groove Back with fans at the Wiltern in Los Angeles, California.
[Source: Author, Tyler Park]

Girls' "Nobody But You," Seotaiji and Boys' "I Know," Trot - a genre of Korean popular music, and so many more, including his latest single "Groove Back."

Accompanied by talented jazz musicians, the band exhibited an exquisite mix of jazz, funk, Latin, and ballad music that got most of the fans off of their seats, with some dancing to the pulsating music. JY Park finished the 2-hour concert by showcasing his beautiful piano skills while singing several K-ballad hits, including his

own "Don't Leave Me."

At age 51, JY Park promised to dedicate the rest of his professional career to performing as he joked that his "Hwangap" (60th birthday) celebration could be capped by another concert with plenty of singing and dancing at the Wiltern. Throughout the night, JY Park expressed his gratitude and love for L.A. JY Park, indeed, exuded confidence, artistry, and musical creativity on a night that his fans will forever remember.