

Student Reporter

Helping the District One Football Game at a Time!



Sean Kim
Grade 11
Los Alamitos High School



Over half our members volunteered for four hours! It was truly inspiring to see how motivated Los Alamitos students were to help the local middle school.
[Source: Author, Sean Kim]

In Los Alamitos, California, Friday nights are a nightmare for McAuliffe Middle School. While football games are fun for spectators and players, it could be better for the staff, who leave the school fields as late as eleven o'clock. Popcorn wrappers, empty bottles, and squished aluminum cans are a common sight during football season, as visitors, despite the numerous available trash cans, somehow fail to throw their garbage away properly.

One day in class, my English teacher mentioned the frustration of the middle school principal. McAuliffe had hosted Friday Night Lights for years, yet the disrespect of their campus had only begun this season. As the Vice President of the California Scholarship Federation at the high school, I looked into how high school students could offer assistance to the middle school and relieve the principal of his worries.

After a brief correspondence, Los Alamitos was approved and ready to visit many volunteers' alma mater. I was determined to leave the fields pristine and trash-free as a token of appreciation to McAuliffe for hosting Friday football.

When I presented the idea in the monthly lunch meeting, the response was immediate and frankly inspiring. Over seventy students completed the volunteer sign-up form, and over half checked shifts as long as four hours, from six to ten at night. I was pleasantly surprised to see how many teenagers were willing to sacrifice their Friday night to pick up trash, without being paid. Once more, I was reminded of the capacity of the Los Alamitos student body to create change in the community and make a positive impact through volunteering.

For the past two Fridays, Los Alamitos High School volunteers have worked to alleviate the garbage situation and liberate the poor staff from another long night. The California Scholarship Federation club has been wildly successful in recruiting volunteers and leaving the fields spotless of even a bottle cap. The McAuliffe principal thanked us for all our help, and it feels great to be recognized for our contributions.

What surprised me the most was how effective we were as a team. It seemed as if our mere presence was enough to deter most visitors from littering. As I perused the fields, I couldn't help but smile as I saw many volunteers dumping full trash bags. We were helping the district one football game at a time. We'll continue to support the middle school as the football season comes to a close.

Student Reporter

2023 Yallwest Festival



Alexis Choi
Grade 10
South High School

Fans of artists and bands attend concerts, while sports fans attend games. However, the opportunity to attend large-scale events dedicated to books is not so common. On April 29, at Santa Monica High School, from 9 to 6 P.M., the 2023 Yallwest Book Festival was held for readers to meet their favorite authors, purchase and receive free books, enjoy interactive activities, and connect with other readers.

The entire school campus was filled with various booths, food trucks, and stages. There were special events and games, such as spin-the-wheel activities where readers could get free books, as well as other merchandise like stickers and banners.

There were many opportunities to get free gifts aside from the games. Attendees could submit their names for giveaways and raffles. There were even promotional booths that offered free books simply for following their social media. Most people were able to receive free books from the collection provided by the Book



Think of attending next year's Yallwest to hear from famous authors about writing, reading, and more!
[Source: Author, Alexis Choi]

Truck, parked in the Business Lot. Attendees were also given the opportunity to purchase books and other goods from popular vendors, such as Barnes and Noble and Geoffrey's Comics.

Perhaps the part of the festival that most readers were looking forward to was the Yallwest book signings. Some well-known authors included Nicola and David Yoon, Becky Albertalli, Maurene Goo, Victoria Aveyard, Marie Lu, and Sarah Mylnowski. Seeing the masterminds behind my favorite novels up close in person was like meeting celebrities. I was able to get personal copies of books signed and had short, thrilling interactions with the authors.

Unexpectedly, the wait was not too long, especially at earlier times of the event.

I was also able to attend keynotes moderated by my favorite authors. The Opening Keynote was held by Marie Lu, author of the *Legend* series, and Casey McQuiston. Unfortunately, it was a ticketed panel, which required me to get tickets ahead of time. Though I was unaware of this, I was able to attend free keynotes, such as "Plotting Murder... That's Twisted," where I was able to learn about the mechanics of writing murder mysteries and thrillers. The panel of authors also shared their experiences writing now-best-selling novels, and their

tips and tricks for crafting stories. As an aspiring author, I felt inspired just sitting in their presence.

At 6 P.M., before closing, the Yallwest Smackdown was held in Barnum Hall, where the entire cast of featured authors was brought on stage for lip sync battles, mad lib, never-have-I-ever, and other games.

Yallwest was a lively, colorful event made for book lovers and creatives everywhere. Though it quickly became extremely crowded and lines ridiculously long, there were so many activities and events that there was still an opportunity to do something while waiting. Yallwest was also an amazing event for aspiring writers, as they could meet the creators of their favorite novels, and even listen to seminars about creative writing, books, and the experiences and life lessons of these accomplished authors.

The 2024 Yallwest Festival will be held next year in Santa Monica. All readers, writers, and artists are highly encouraged to attend for a truly unforgettable experience!

Student Reporter

Wild Animals in our Community



Theo Lim
Grade 9
Crescenta Valley High School

Living in a community near the mountains, I get the privilege of encountering wild animals quite often. While there are many different animals that can be found in this area, some of the animals I have personally seen are coyotes, bears, bobcats, and mountain lions.

One of the most frequently spotted animals in our community are squirrels. These small creatures are known for their playful nature and are often found scurrying about in trees, on the ground, or invading gardens or homes in search of food. The squirrels' activities are capable of wounding trees or tree nuts, and destroying human-made structures such as housings and wires. Because of this, it is important to keep an eye on them in order to prevent damaged properties or disruption of local ecosystems.

Coyotes are another species that can be observed in mountain

communities. These creatures can often be sighted at night, wandering through neighborhoods. Generally, coyotes are not aggressive toward humans, but they can become a threat to other animals. Unfortunately, there have been multiple reports of pets in my neighborhood being attacked by these wild canines. To keep yourself and your pets safe, local news suggests that it is essential to secure trash bins and pick up fallen fruits so that coyotes do not think of your property as a place to find food.

Perhaps the most intimidating animals that can be seen are the bears and mountain lions. These large creatures rarely appear near human properties, but when encountered, the best thing to do is to remain calm and slowly back away while keeping eye contact with the beast. It is strongly advised to call the sheriff or 911 in order to prevent any harm from occurring.



I had a rare encounter with a wild bear in front of my house, as it was scavenging for food in the trash bins.
[Source: Author, Theo Lim]

There are many reasons why wild animal sightings are common in mountain communities. One factor may be that human development has encroached on their natural habitat, causing them to venture closer to populated areas in search of food and shelter. Climate change may also be a contributing factor in the increase in wild animal sightings in our community. Changes in temperature and precipitation patterns can affect the behavior of many animal species, causing them to alter their migratory pat-

terns or search for new food sources. In some cases, these changes can lead to conflicts between humans and wildlife.

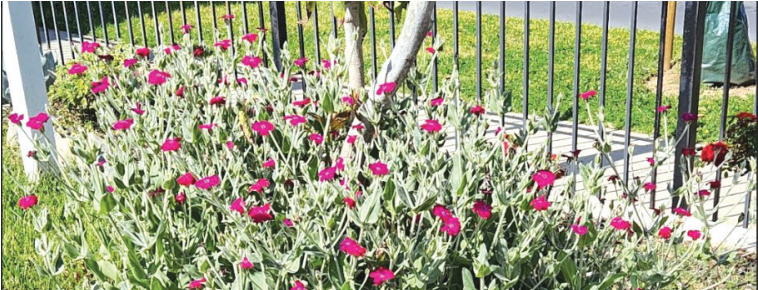
Overall, wild animals are a crucial part of all of our communities, and it is important that we learn to coexist with them in a safe and respectful manner. By taking precautions and supporting efforts to preserve natural habitats, we can ensure that these creatures continue to thrive in our environment for generations to come.

Student Reporter

A Spectacular Summer



Sarah Kim
Grade 7
Marlborough School



As the summer flowers begin to bloom, students know their favorite season is right around the corner!
[Source: Author, Sarah Kim]

As the school year is slowly coming to an end and the most anticipated season for students comes closer, I'd like to give some ideas for summer! First, here are some ideas for foods to try eating or making! As ice cream is a popular delicacy in the summer, for those in the Los Angeles area, I would recommend these ice cream shops in Koreatown. First up there is The Dolly Llama, a place that serves delicious ice cream and various types of waffles along with it. There are bubble waffles, og liege, and even shakes! Next, we have Holy Roly Ice

Cream, which sells ice cream that is first in a liquid form, then solidified on a cold platform and rolled up to be served with delicious toppings. The last places I would recommend are Jeni's Splendid Ice Cream or Salt and Straw Gourmet Ice Cream, which can both be located on Larchmont!

Now onto foods to try making! First, the classic summer treat, popsicles. You can grab any juice, frozen fruits, or even smoothies and put them into popsicle molds and freeze them! Another great

recipe is Watermelon Kebabs! As watermelon is a popular fruit in the summer, putting it on a skewer along with some other fruits, including strawberries, peaches, or kiwis, is quite delicious! If you want to put a twist on these fruit kebabs, you could make Tanghulu using sugar and water. Simply pour both ingredients into a pot until a small simmer. Then dip the fruits in and let it cool. This candied treat is often popular as street food in China! You can also use fruits to make a salad, along with summer vegetables, including cucumbers, tomatoes, and more! Salads are always good with a dressing, and I recommend Feast from The East Sesame Dressing, classical Ranch, or Thousand Island!

Some other ideas to add to your list of things to do in the summer are going on a bike ride, flying a kite, having a water fight with friends, having a movie night, visiting the beach, watching the

sunset, having a picnic, or watching fireworks! It's great to be outside in the summer with the warm weather. It can get hot, though, so remember to always stay hydrated! You can also wear bug spray to get rid of pesky mosquitoes! Sunscreen is also a great thing to have in case of sensitive skin.

Spending time with friends and family in the hot weather is great! As students finish their finals and end school, they are able to relieve a lot of stress during the summer. Engaging in fun activities outdoors improves their physical and mental well-being. It is important to know how to balance the two when in and out of school. Summer is a great time to get fresh and start new at the next school year! It's a period of coping and easing the pressure that school can bring up! Taking part in activities will keep you active and content over the summer!

Student Reporter

Asian American Footsteps Conference 2023



Jenny Jang
Grade 11
St. Paul's High School



Students at a workshop discussing Academic Pressure and the Model Minority Myth
[Source: Seamans, Michael]

AAFC, or the Asian American Footsteps Conference, is an annual affinity gathering of students from New England independent schools, taking place at a different school each year. Last year, the conference was held at Phillips Andover Academy, and next year, AAFC will be hosted at Governor's Academy. This year at AAFC, St. Paul's School hosted a total of 357 students from 26 independent schools across New England. Thirty-one different workshops were presented, with 11 of them designed and organized by SPS students. Participants either host or participate in a wide variety of original workshops addressing experiences and/or problems shared by the Asian American community. Workshop topics range from the school and social experience, such as Asian Americans in athletics, social activism, and how Asian Americans are represented in supreme court cases. The conference was designed to be a safe and inclusive space, designated to focus on the common

yet diverse aspects of the Asian American experience. The day then ended with an address from a closing speaker, on how their career relates to the theme of the conference and its significance, in giving insight about the future opportunities for peers motivated to continue this work.

Students began preparing for the day of the conference by starting their workshop weeks in advance. Some of these workshops had interactive aspects, for example, the fried rice workshop. Two students gave information about the history of fried rice. Fried rice has become one of the most

popular Asian dishes ever. However, apart from being delicious, it also has a cultural and historical significance. Though fried rice originated in China, countries all around the world, like Thailand, Indonesia, India, and even the United States, have made it their own. Their workshop dove into the development of the popular dish, and more generally, Asian American food, into contemporary pop culture. After a slide show presentation on the history of fried rice, their workshop attendees got to literally taste the spread of fried rice around the world through a selection of samples that the workshop presenters cooked the

night before, including southern bacon fried rice, Korean kimchi fried rice, and Thai pineapple fried rice. This was just one of the many workshops that took place on the conference day.

After a successful conference where people gained knowledge and new friends, I was able to interview and gather lots of positive comments from my peers at St. Paul's who attended the conference. "We got to talk about academic pressure, the concept of coming home, third culture, and more. It was in those moments, in conversation and discussion, that I built connections with fellow Asian students and bonded over our shared experiences," said Chris Shia, one of the heads of the planning committee for AAFC. Similarly, Tina Yang stated, "I didn't think it was possible to be this vulnerable in front of strangers I met just 10 seconds ago. But as we sat in that circle, we drew out the best in each other." Clearly, AAFC was a positive experience for many who attended.

Student Reporter

Should Banning Books Still Be Allowed?



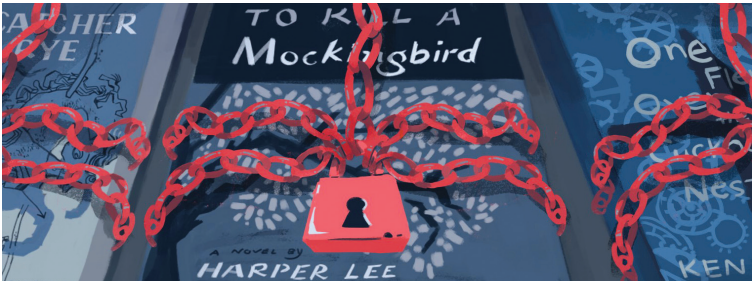
Christina Park
Grade 9
Crescenta Valley High School

To Kill a Mockingbird, a novel by American author Harper Lee, was published in 1960 and has sold forty million copies worldwide. This book was even turned into an award-winning film. However, despite all the praise, Lee's novel has also been banned by numerous schools.

Book banning is the practice of prohibiting certain books from being read or circulated by members of a particular group or community. Government officials, school boards, or any other authorities who believe the content of the book is offensive or obscene to the intended audience can have it banned. Banning books can be dated back to ancient times and to society today. The United States has banned the most books across the whole world. Though the action of banning books may be beneficial, it has also been abused and used to target certain types of ethnic groups. This controversial topic

has split opinions that have caused many debates and uprisings.

The contrasting opinions about this topic have been up in the air since the beginning, but it has shown to be beneficial in many ways. First, parents are able to decide what material their children are exposed to and when. It is certainly valid that some information is restricted, especially when the kids are younger. For example, a four-year-old should not be reading a book about wars and death. Though they technically are allowed to read whatever they want and obtain knowledge, it may lead to twisted views as they grow up. Additionally, many feel that topics such as sex, violence, drug use, or anything beyond these should and must not be introduced in schools or public libraries. These are all subjects that contain adult themes that young people are not mature or ready to experience. When used correctly, banning books can be a helpful



To Kill a Mockingbird by Harper Lee has been banned from thousands of schools in the US.
[Source: Author, Christina Park]

tool to assist children and young adults.

On the other hand, there are counter-arguments for banning books. Though parents have the right to choose what their children read, they do not have the right to restrict what books are available to other people. This was backed up by the Supreme Court ruling on Board of Education v. Pico when Justice William Brennan wrote that, "Local school boards may not remove books from school libraries simply because they dislike the ideas contained in those

books." People have also made the comment that most of the challenged books actually help people get a better idea of the real world and their place in it. Though the information in the book may be uncomfortable to many parents, it describes the issues and problems in the world that are still applicable today. If children are not introduced to these ideas, they will grow to be naive and ignorant.

This ongoing debate may never come to an end, but everyone still has the right to read and explore whatever they want.