

EDITORS COLUMN

A Botanical Escape



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The inspiring centerpiece displayed at Bellagio’s Conservatory.
[Source: Author, Joshua Kim]

During summertime, when the world dons its wonderful hues and the sun encaptures us in its radiant warmth, a compelling invitation whispers through the air: "Embrace the season and let life unfold around you." The mere mention of the phrase "summertime" evokes images of breathtaking hikes,

spirited water balloon fights, and dazzling July 4th fireworks that wait to adorn the night sky. While it is undoubtedly important for our well-being to venture outdoors during this season to both unwind from the year's stresses and engage in physical activity, why not transcend the usual summertime activities and embark on a truly extraordinary experience? Step away from the predictable trip to your local park and indulge in an enchanted visit to Bellagio's Conservatory & Botanical Gardens - a sanctuary that embodies summer's vibrancy in a symphony of green.

The Bellagio Conservatory has become a sought-after attraction for tourists across America, featuring a captivating botanical garden for every season of the year. After personally experiencing its marvel firsthand, I can con-

fidently attest to the enchanting ambiance it exudes. As summer approaches, the conservatory has embraced a theme that perfectly embodies the serenity of this season - a tribute to the splendor of nature.

To describe the conservatory as beautiful would be an understatement. As I entered the garden, splendor enveloped my senses. The conservatory seemed to reminisce a painter's palette, a mesmerizing tapestry of colors and elegance enveloped my surroundings. Scarlet, golden, and amethyst blooms painted the air around me. Above hung delicate decorations where graceful butterflies danced in a suspended fashion. However, the centerpiece truly stole the show. Nestled in the back of the conservatory stood a masterful statue. Two hands intertwined with a bustle of flowers as water

flowed gracefully from the ends of the two palms.

As I left the conservatory, a subtle message whispered to my soul - a subtle reminder that although summer is a time for adventure and exhilarating activities, it is also a period of growth, self-reflection, and deep healing. In the midst of the season's vibrant energy and boundless opportunities, there lies a subtle but precious lesson: it is perfectly alright to surrender to an idea of adventure and instead find solace in rest.

Imbue your summer with lively energy and appreciate the respite it brings. This will result in cherished memories and personal revitalization. Allow the sun to warm your soul and add a visit to the extraordinary Bellagio's Conservatory and Botanical Gardens to your summer itinerary.

EDITORS COLUMN

A Bright Summer



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Summer vacation is approaching for all students alike, anywhere from elementary school to college, and it is optimal for all of us to have the best summer vacation of our lives while balancing all aspects of life as best as possible.

To start with, an amazing summer break first includes hanging out with friends. Social interaction is very important in our lives, and it is necessary for us to have these moments during an extended period of time such as this break. Especially during the school year, it can be extremely hard to find time to see friends, especially in high school or college. However, during the break, you have more time to rest and meet out with those you may not have seen in a while. Even if you are able to see your friends frequently during the school year, it still is nice to see them more frequently during the break to have good times.

Exercising is also a very good idea to implement in your break.



The West Ranch Tennis Team finishing the season and preparing for summer camp
[Source: Author, Jeremiah Chun]

Summer is the best time to go outside and really embrace the outdoors, as there is virtually perfect weather, and the break syncs in very well with this since students are not spending the majority of their days in school. With so much leisure time, exercise can be an extremely effective way to spend your afternoons since you can have fun while maintaining your body health at the same time. Paired with going out with

friends, participating in physical activity can be an entertaining way to really interact with the outside environment and be mentally healthy.

Traveling is also something to do during summer vacation. Since you are not going to go to school for nearly two months, there is plenty of time for you and your families or friends to explore other places besides your local area! Not

only does traveling create new experiences for you regarding different cultures around the world but there is also a certain kind of joy that comes with exploring areas that you have never been in before, which really makes going to other places extremely fun. With summer break, timing is not really an issue, as there are many windows for going to many different areas with different time intervals, from a few days to even a whole month! Traveling is an amazing way to both enhance your mind and see new phenomena in places around the world.

Summer break is an opportunity to engage in many different types of activities, from going out with friends to getting jobs or internships. With virtually two months of free time, students are able to do whatever they can think of, and this essential break is a necessary time to finally rest and reflect on all of the accomplishments that you have done in the school year.

Student Reporter

Court Ruling Breaks Ground for Affirmative Action



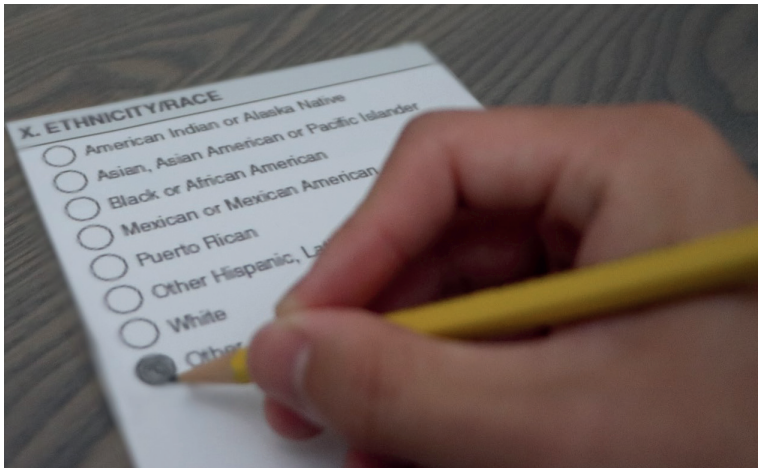
Caleb Lee
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For some time, cases on Affirmative Action and new rulings have been unfound, the latest relevant cases being "Students for Fair Admissions v. President and Fellows of Harvard College" and "Students for Fair Admissions v. University of North Carolina." However, last month, parents, primarily Asian American, filed a lawsuit against Thomas Jefferson High School, and their new admission policy. This elite high school's new regulations would consist of what these parents called "proxies for race," for example, the replacement of the admissions exam with an essay, considering ZIP codes, and taking income as a factor.

One article from the *New York Times* states, "Admissions officers were also instructed to consider 'experience factors,' such as whether students were poor, were learning English or were attending a middle school that was 'historically underrepresented' at the high school." These "proxies for race" that these parents ar-

gued against are widely faced in other admission processes, not limited to colleges, but even high schools such as Thomas Jefferson High School. Further, proxies in this system include access to a student's zip code, linguistic characteristics, last name, criminal record, and socioeconomic status. This case eventually reached the Supreme Court, which ruled to continue the new admissions process. Being passed onto the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit on Tuesday, May 23, the court ruled in favor of this new admissions process and found that it had not discriminated against Asian American students in its admissions policies.

This decision aligns with the previous case in late 2022, as all three favored the school admission process over the arguments. A need for racial diversity is present in many academic centers, however, is this approach to "proxies for race" the right choice? There is no precise answer, as ethnic groups will face challenges both



According to Ballotpedia, Eight states have enacted laws banning the consideration of race in university admissions: Arizona, California, Florida, Michigan, Nebraska, New Hampshire, Oklahoma, and Washington.
[Source: Author, Caleb Lee]

for and against affirmative action. Values for ethical equality bring the need to consider race in admission processes, as education is generally the solution to success in a community. If affirmative action weren't in place, specific ethnicities and communities would suffer in terms of seeking education due to unequal circumstances. Thus, an impossible hole to crawl out of would result in the continuation of discrimination and trends

of low income among specific ethnic groups. Nevertheless, currently, the Asian American community is also struggling to seek equal opportunities for education due to the authority of affirmative action. Though flawed, this ethical conundrum of affirmative action seems to be the only solution to use equity for underprivileged communities, but hopefully, there will be a better fix to this system in the near future.

Student Reporter

On the Road to Sin City



Justin Kim
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As summer break approaches, Las Vegas should be a top-priority destination to visit. Even though many people believe that Las Vegas is more oriented towards adults, evident in the nickname “Sin City,” there is plenty to do, both within and outside the city, that doesn’t involve gambling.

In terms of hotels, the Venetian is a popular choice, featuring a number of pools, shows, and restaurants. On a typical day, you would wake up in a luxury suite and look over a wide expanse of the Las Vegas Strip before eating at one of the many breakfast joints at the Venetian, such as Bouchon, Chica, or the Grand Lux Café, all of which serve exquisite and elevated cuisine. Afterward, you could choose between watching one of the many shows offered at the Venetian, visiting one of the pools for a swim, or experiencing an authentic gondola ride down the Grand Canal inside an indoor recreation of Venice or outside. To



Anighttime view of Las Vegas from the Palazzo Tower.

[Source: Author, Justin Kim]

finish the day, dinner at Wakuda, a high-end, modern Japanese restaurant, or Miznon, an Israeli street food eatery, could be just what you were craving on the gondolaride.

That covers where you'll be staying; now it's time to decide where you'd like to explore! Outside the city, for example, there are a number of tours that lead to the Grand Canyon and other natural wonders, such as Antelope Can-

yon and Horseshoe Bend. From my personal experience on such a tour, there really isn't a view that can rival the one seen, legs swinging above the Colorado River from the edge of the Grand Canyon at sunset. As an alternative, taking a walk through Antelope Canyon provides a surreal experience surrounded by the smooth, lustrous, curved canyon walls. Even if Nevada may seem like a barren desert at first, there are plenty of natural phenomena to gawk at.

When it turns dark, Las Vegas shines even brighter than it does during the day. Not counting the flashy signs pointing every which way, the Bellagio fountain show prominently stands out. There are more than 1,000 fountains and close to 4,800 lights making up the attraction, with water shooting up as high as 460 feet. It is possible to avoid the crowds that gather to see the magic first-hand because of the numerous vantage points surrounding the show. As an added bonus, it's completely free and runs from noon to midnight.

Additionally, there are a myriad of other activities and interests to pursue while residing in Las Vegas besides the ones listed here. There are multiple indoor acrobatic shows to watch, and there are tons of shops in downtown Las Vegas. All things considered, a trip to Sin City is definitely one of the best ways to relieve some stress and enjoy yourself during the summer.

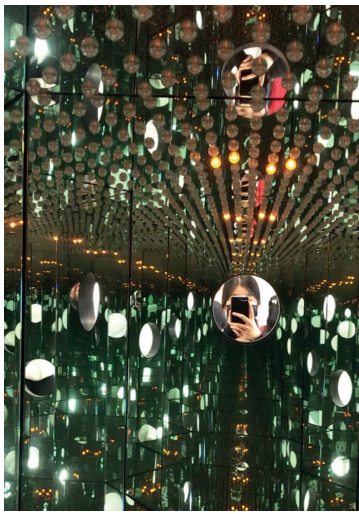
Student Reporter

Visiting the Broad



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To celebrate the end of another year of AP Art History, our class took a field trip to the Broad, a contemporary art museum in Downtown Los Angeles. The museum was named after its founders and philanthropists, Eli and Edythe Broad, who financed the \$140 million building that continues to house contemporary art from the 1950s to present day. It includes work by well-known artists like Picasso, Basquiat, Warhol, Walker, and Kusama. Even though it wasn't my first time visiting the museum, I was still really excited to go because, from time to time, the Broad switches out its art pieces from the enormous collection it holds, so there will always be new pieces to discover and learn about. Also, because the AP Art History exam forced me to learn the history behind each piece and the artists, I had a lot of background knowledge that allowed me to understand the message behind each contemporary piece, which



Yayoi Kusama's Infinity Mirror at the Broad Museum in Downtown Los Angeles. [Source: Author, Annette Je]

I wasn't able to grasp before, and it was really fun seeing the pieces that I had seen on my exam in person.

The one thing I would definitely recommend visiting at the Broad is Yayoi Kusama's Infinity Room and Mirror. Kusama is also an artist that I looked forward to

because of her well-known usage of dots to display her unique vision. For the Infinity Room, be sure to reserve a spot before going to the museum. This art piece is definitely one of the more popular ones due to the beautiful Instagram pictures that can be taken inside and the crystal chandelier illusion that it creates. Thankfully, I did reserve spots for my friends and me (reservation is free), so we did not have to wait long. When we finally entered, I was surprised by how small the room was. My group consisted of 5 people, including myself, and there wasn't much room for us to shift around, and the amount of time we were given to stay was very short, only around 4-5 minutes to take the pictures we wanted. Also, be careful not to trip! With the constantly shifting lights that darken and trippy mirrors, it was easy to lose sight of where to step.

After my group and I finished looking around the whole museum, around 1 hour and 30 minutes, we were very hungry. The great thing about the Broad is that around it is many great restaurants, including Grand Central Market (World Market), which is only a 10-minute walk from the Broad. The market holds numerous booths inside with all different types of cuisines, ranging from Japanese, Chinese, and Korean food, to Cuban, Mexican, Peruvian, and German food, with most also offering dessert. Every booth also gave the option for me and my friends to “to-go” our food, so after receiving it, we had the option of either staying inside the Market or eating at one of the nearby lounge places. Overall, I would highly recommend visiting the Broad and the World Market this summer. And if you're not an art lover, visiting downtown Los Angeles and the many hidden treasures it holds is also a great way to hang out with friends and family.

Student Reporter

Young Artists Orchestra of Los Angeles Community Concert



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On May 25, 2023, the Young Artists Orchestra of Los Angeles (YAOLA) held a community concert at the James Armstrong Theatre at the Civic Center of Torrance, California. The YAO-LA performers hold an annual summer community concert where they are able to showcase their improvement from the previous year. Once again, this concert showed how much the young instrumentalists developed and advanced their musical skills through their outstanding performances.

YAOLA consists of young players, from the ages of 11 to 17, from South Bay and Orange County. Each section of the orchestra meets once a week, for 2 hours, to practice for events such as this community concert and previous concerts such as the 2022 Los Angeles Choir Festival, which was held to raise awareness and support the AAPI community,

and the 2023 Spring Concert, which was held to raise money to help build a senior home in Garden Grove, California. The orchestra is led by the main conductor, Daniel Suk, and teachers, such as Castor Teoh, an esteemed trumpet player who has appeared in numerous orchestras and participated in a myriad of competitions, and Yao Wang, a cellist who has both a Bachelors and Masters degree for music performance at the University of Southern California and Azusa Pacific University.

The concert started with a string quartet, an ensemble of four performers, which consisted of 2 violins, a viola, and a cello. The quartet, led by Laurie Driskill, played “Emperor Waltz” by Johann Strauss and a song created by the conductor, “Volando.” Next, a violin and piano duet performed “Romanian Folk Dances Sz. 56” by Bela Bartok. For the finale, the



The performers get ready to bow at the end of the concert. [Source: Yunsuk Choi]

whole orchestra, led by Conductor Daniel Suk, started with the slow-tempo song “Intermezzo” from the opera “Cavalleria Rusticana” by Pietro Mascagni. They then played a song about the two star-crossed lovers, “Romeo and Juliet” by Piotr I. Tchaikovsky, an atmospheric tune: “Oblivion” by Astor Piazzolla with a violin solo, the exciting melody of “Gershwin by George!” by Gershwin, the harmonious “Greensleeves” by Traditional with another violin solo,

and “You’ll Never Walk Alone” by Richard Rogers accompanied by Gabriel Manro, a baritone soloist who has won multiple Grammy awards and appeared in many operas.

The concert ended with a reception full of snacks and drinks provided by the parents of YAOLA artists. After months of practice, the performers, once again, created a memorable and melodious stage!