

Student Reporter



**Jenna Kim**  
Grade 10  
Pacifica Christian High School

## Beginning of the Podcast



Editing the first episode of Pacifica Podcast was exciting. The group looks forward to more podcasts in the future. [Source: Author, Jenna Kim]

The first episode of the Pacifica Podcast was filmed on November 17th, 2023. After founding the podcast for the school this year, there were a couple of goals I had in mind for both the audience and the participants of the podcast. Firstly, I wanted students to be encouraged. It's well known that with the hustle culture of high school, students are dealing with immense stress, academics, and relationships. One does, however, know that what students desperately need and yet find hard to do,

is ask for the help of others. This is where the podcast comes in. From open advice on handling school stress or getting a break by learning about silly topics, students would be encouraged in all aspects of their lives by listening to the insight of others. A podcast can be a space to ask bigger questions about God, careers after school, relationships, and more. And who better than the educators, faculty, and supporters at school, who work each day for students' well-being and growth, to answer these questions? This was the goal for the podcast at Pacifica.

For the first episode, the team in charge wanted to interview Pacifica's Precalculus teacher, Mr. McCurdy. Not only does his energy at school provide students with joy and encouragement, but his raw honesty inspires even those who aren't his students and makes it easy for others to get to know him and be comfortable around him. As the student body finds it increasingly harder to find this peace in many

of their relationships and interactions, with his humor and candor, one believed he would be the best guest for the first Pacifica Podcasting episode. Questions about his faith, career, and experiences in China, as well as his thoughts on the latest cultural trends, influencers, and brands, truly brought forth, although only a glimpse, a picture of who Mr. McCurdy was. Now, one can only hope that listeners will feel the same way.

November 17th, 2023, was the recording day of the first episode. As it was the very first recording, two interviewers, two film and audio recorders, and one guest sat down in a room of opportunity. Here, we faced a few obstacles, which we thankfully were able to fix. The first being that, while recording, we realized there was no one watching over the audio. Thus, when the computer reflected the crackly sounds between the banter, it was a huge realization that the first take would have to be erased. Though this was a

discouragement, Lexi, my partner in interviewing, improvised new questions to provide engagement, leading to new, unplanned conversations of more quality advice and enlightenment. The next challenge was when the camera with which the filmmaker was recording died. But after searching for batteries, the podcast's faculty sponsor and mentor, Mr. Fierro, helped to bring the camera back to life, and the podcast started its third take. Thus, after ten to twenty minutes of additional recording, the podcast episode was finished! Excited, and having learned new skills of both conversation and recording, each member stepped out with anticipation for new adventures thenceforth.

Now, the podcast group one is working to edit and synthesize audio and video visuals. Thereafter, we will focus on starting media campaigns. I look forward, with the team, students, and staff, to the amazing potentialities of the Pacifica Podcast.

Student Reporter



**Ethan Chang**  
Grade 12  
Stockdale High School

## Holiday Shopping

Whenever the holidays come around, many stores around the country begin to supply and advertise various items related to any major holiday, regardless of how appropriate the decorations are. Currently, in November, stores such as Costco, Walmart, and Target are selling both Thanksgiving and Christmas items in order to rid themselves of their supply goods that were being kept from last year. This is even before the arrival of Black Friday, the day after Thanksgiving, when prices are discounted and stores open early in lieu of potential customers. But for me, I prefer to spend time with my family and tune out to the chaos of customers trying to grab anything off of shore shelves during the spree that is holiday shopping.

On a trip to one store, I took



The Christmas aisle at Costco was put out even before Thanksgiving arrived. [Source: Author, Ethan Chang]

several pictures of various holiday-related items that were being sold on shelves, particularly the Thanksgiving decorations that my family wanted to buy in time for our extended family, who were arriving later. I also

snapped a few photos of Christmas decorations, like winter rosemaries, snowmen, and fake reindeer, which were just as visible and prevalent for sale despite the holiday being a month away. I do find it funny, however, that Halloween was still on sale despite it being over a month since the holiday. Another noticeable factor was that not a lot of people were buying many of the items, though it could be attributed to the fact that most people had already bought their fair share of Thanksgiving items weeks ago, and the fact that no one wanted to buy Christmas decorations at the moment. It has something to do with the anticipation for Black Friday, where customers are waiting for the prices of many items on sale to be discounted. By that time, stores are expected to be flooded with

eager customers who are willing to buy almost anything that appears cheap.

For me, holiday shopping is not exactly my cup of tea, but it is one way for me to bond with my family, who often go to different markets and stores in order to buy essential necessities that are now several percent off. Despite how crowded many stores can be with customers trying to get their hands on items they want, such as a PS5 or toys for children, I always tune things out in order to spend time with my family instead of the often crowded holiday of Thanksgiving, where my house is filled with extended family members who fill up every living space in each room. As much as I dislike holiday shopping, I still participate in it with my family to buy anything that is on sale.

Student Reporter



**Eunice Minji Choi**  
Grade 11  
North Hollywood High School

## Las Vegas Grand Prix: What is it?

Would you consider the act of driving a sport? When you ask someone what their favorite sport is, they'd probably name a common one, like basketball, soccer, or baseball. But if you ask me, I'd say my favorite sport to watch is Formula 1.

Formula 1 is the highest class of international racing. Since its beginnings in 1950, F1 has been the most prestigious motorsport in the world. An F1 season lasts the whole year, and the number of races and locations vary by season; there are 23 races across the globe, including three in the US—Miami, Austin, and Las Vegas. There are ten competing teams—from the original Ferrari to the newly added Haas—and two drivers for each team. However, recently, the FIA approved an 11th team for the 2025 season.

A typical Formula 1 race weekend is three days long, going from

Friday to Sunday. Friday consists of two 1-hour long practice sessions that allow drivers and their teams to test and figure out what will help them give their best performance. Saturday consists of another 1-hour long practice session for last-minute adjustments and a three-stage qualifying race that determines the drivers' starting positions for the actual race. The slowest five racers are eliminated in Q1, an 18-minute long phase, and the next slowest five in Q2, a 15-minute long phase. These two phases determine the positions 11 to 20 for the race. Finally, there is a 12-minute long phase, Q3, which determines the top 10 grid slots. Obviously, if you are the fastest during qualifying, you get to be on pole, the first spot, leading the race. However, recently, the FIA added a 100 km long F1 Sprint where the top 8 fastest drivers get points. Sometimes, the Saturday practice session is replaced with this Sprint

Team	Team Principal	Driver #1, Country	Driver #2, Country
Red Bull	Christian Horner	Max Verstappen, Netherlands	Sergio Perez, Mexico
Mercedes AMG	Toto Wolff	Lewis Hamilton, United Kingdom	George Russell, United Kingdom
Scuderia Ferrari	Frederic Vasseur	Charles Leclerc, Monaco	Carlos Sainz, Spain
McLaren	Andrea Stella	Lando Norris, United Kingdom	Oscar Piastri, Australia
Aston Martin	Mike Krack	Fernando Alonso, Spain	Lance Stroll, Canada
Alpine	Bruno Famin	Esteban Ocon, France	Pierre Gasly, France
Williams	James Vowles	Alex Albon, Thailand	Logan Sargeant, USA
AlphaTauri	Franz Tost	Yuki Tsunoda, Japan	Daniel Ricciardo, Australia
Alfa Romeo	Alessandro Bravi	Valtteri Bottas, Finland	Guanyu Zhou, China
Haas	Guenter Steiner	Kevin Magnussen, Denmark	Nico Hulkenburg, Germany

Formula 1 teams, team principals, and drivers of the 2023 season (in order of current team standings). [Source: Author, Eunice Minji Choi]

Shootout. Sunday is the actual race day and usually lasts about 1.5 to 2 hours. The number of laps driven varies on the circuit, from the fewest being 44 laps in Belgium, to the most being 78 laps in Monaco.

Recently, on November 16, 2023, Las Vegas hosted the 22nd Grand Prix of the season. It featured a 310 km long race along the famous Las Vegas Strip with 50 laps. The race weekend started on Thursday this time because it

is the US; in Europe it would be a Friday. Being an avid fan of Formula 1, I've been planning to go to this grand prix since the beginning of the year. The actual race tickets are far too expensive, so I decided to watch the race through the windows of a Strip-facing hotel room. It was no surprise to see Verstappen win this race, but as a Ferrari fan, I would have loved to see Leclerc or Sainz win. I was excited to have such an experience, and hope to be able to attend another grand prix again soon!



Student Reporter

## Pushing Beyond My Comfort Zone Through Model UN



**Isleen Lee**  
Grade 10  
Harvard-Westlake School



This was the placard for my country, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, during TritonMUN.

[Source: Author, Isleen Lee]

On October 28th, I attended my first Model UN conference, also known as MUN. Model UN is an extracurricular activity for high school and college students to role-play delegates representing countries who have to solve real-world problems, simulating what the United Nations does in real life. As a high school sophomore highly interested in pursuing diplomacy and law, this year was the year that I decided to join the MUN club at

my school. I immediately noticed that my interests were accounted for, and I was open to many opportunities to push beyond my comfort zone.

As someone who has been and remains an introvert, observer, and thinker, I found that on numerous occasions, public speaking was not my strongest suit. I felt nervous, even trembling when walking up the stage to face the audience. It felt as if everyone was judging all the words coming out of my mouth, and I was constantly afraid of making a mistake. However, the first step I took towards overcoming this fear was acknowledging that this is a universal experience for the many people with stage fright. Last year, during my ninth-grade year, I began to search a wider variety of fields and was prompted to try new things, and, as the saying goes, “You won’t know if you don’t try.” At the start of this year, I made it my goal to narrow those selections down into activities that I wanted to participate in the most. Joining Model

UN was the epitome of that.

MUN at Harvard-Westlake School is known to be one of the strongest in Los Angeles, California. With that in mind, I felt that I was joining a group of capable student leaders and like-minded individuals who were as passionate as I was to consistently discuss politics, climate change, and multi-faceted world issues. Although I had no previous experience, it was my goal to push beyond my comfort zone and step up my public speaking skills. Thus, when the interest form for the first conference at the University of California San Diego rolled around, I submitted my name among others, both experienced and not. This conference was known as TritonMUN, Triton being the mascot of the university, and was a great first to be introduced into the realm of Model United Nations. I was assigned to be the delegate for the Democratic Republic of the Congo, aka, DRC, in the Economics and Social Council to discuss, with other delegates, solutions to end climate

change globally. The jargon was confusing before the conference, as I had only heard about the rules of procedure, but had not experienced them in person.

To my delight, this conference was very enjoyable, and my fellow delegates and the chair were fun people to spend the day with. I gave speeches and participated in group discussions during unmoderated caucuses, and things began to fall into place. It was not as intense as I thought MUN would be, where everyone was constantly debating, but everyone was friendly and open to answering questions. TritonMUN was amusing and gratifying to compete at, and although I did not win an award, other delegates from my school did, and the team effort was heartwarming. As I am writing this, I have completed day 1 of 2 of UCLA’s BruinMUN, so I can say that joining MUN has been the right decision, to both further my involvement and achieve personal goals to push beyond the boundaries of my comfort zone.

Student Reporter

## The Start of the New Wrestling Season



**Joanne Kim**  
Grade 10  
La Canada High School

Wrestling is typically a male-dominated sport. However, in 2023, women’s wrestling was officially declared an emerging sport as it rapidly gained popularity in all age groups. For high school students, it takes place in the winter season, which lasts from November to February. During the season, high school wrestlers compete in folkstyle.

There are three main types of wrestling that are open to high schoolers—folkstyle, freestyle, and Greco-Roman. Folkstyle is arguably the safest, as it has the most rules that prevent athletes from any serious injuries. The aggressive nature of the sport is often seen negatively, but what may not be considered is the training that goes into preparing for every match.

Unlike other athletes, wrestlers walk onto the mat not knowing what to expect from their op-



The Spartan Scramble allowed different schools to compete in a casual setting without any consequences to the outcomes, allowing the wrestlers to truly practice their techniques. [Source: Author, Joanne Kim]

ponent, as each and every match is unique. No two matches will ever be the same, so it is crucial to have a strong foundation with a solid knowledge of the basics. Wrestling is also one of the hardest sports physically, mentally, and even emotionally. With six minutes on the clock, broken into three two-minute periods, the wrestlers wrestle until one gets pinned or wins by points. It is a very challenging sport, both physically and mentally, as being on the

mat puts the athletes in a very vulnerable position.

On November 11th, La Canada High School hosted the Spartan Scramble, which is a free-for-all, open mat tournament. It is informal as the point of it is to give new wrestlers an idea of what matches will feel like before they start recording their personal records. This year, there were twelve participating schools from all over the southern region of California.

For me, it was an amazing experience, as I got to compete on the mat once more. Although it is an extremely tough sport that tests me mentally and physically, there’s something about it that forces me to come back for more. The feeling of adrenaline is addicting as it takes over my body and allows me to act on instinct. When asked about her thoughts on wrestling, a teammate who had been with the sport for three years said, “Wrestling is an amazing way to stay active and grounded.”

Although it might not be the right sport for everyone, I would recommend those who enjoy athletics to give it a shot. It may not seem appealing when just looking at it, but trying the sport is very different from watching it, so I would highly encourage everyone who is interested to take a leap of faith and try it out.

Editors Column

## Celebrating Ambassador Diane Edith Watson’s 90th Birthday



**Rubie Choi**  
Grade 12  
Torrance High School

On December 25, 2023, Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass hosted honorable Ambassador Diane Edith Watson’s 90th birthday party at the Getty House, the official residence of the Los Angeles mayor. As part of the Young Artists Orchestra of Los Angeles, I was given the opportunity to perform for the guest of honor and the other attendees.

Ambassador Watson is a prominent figure in politics and diplomacy. She was the first African American woman to be elected to the California State Senate and to serve on the Los Angeles Unified School District Board of Education. She served as a member of the United States House of Representatives and was also an ambassador to Micronesia. She has strongly advocated for various issues, including healthcare, education, and women’s rights. Her contributions have made a positive impact on

many communities.

The white and gold decorations, along with the sunny weather of Los Angeles, brilliantly embellished the party. The Getty House’s beautiful and spacious outdoor area featuring lush greenery, well-manicured lawns, and vibrant flowers made it the ideal place to commemorate the Ambassador. There were elegant pathways that wended through the garden and a seating area for socializing and enjoying the event. The aroma of the food made by Chef Marilyn and her southern cuisine filled the air. With the guest of honor and the mayor in attendance, many other dignified members of the community joined the celebration, such as Holly J. Mitchell, L.A. County Supervisor; Dr. George J. McKenna III, Los Angeles Unified School Board Member; State Senator Lola Smallwood Cuevas; and many more. The speeches were

given by Reverend Greg Patterson (Pastoral Assoc Transfiguration Church), members of the Los Angeles African American Women’s Public Policy Institute, Councilmen, members of the Los Angeles Unified School Board, and State Senators all honored and highlighted the great contributions that the Ambassador made. Freda Payne and the RAW Sugar Jazz Band, Elaine Gibbs, Jaman Laws, and my orchestra’s performances of a jazz medley, National Anthem, and soundtracks of old classical movies, such as “Breakfast at Tiffany’s,” filled the event with excitement and melodious tunes.

Celebrating the Ambassador’s 90th birthday at the Getty House was special because it provided an opportunity to honor her remarkable contributions and achievements. The party took on considerable significance and distinction



Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass giving the opening speech highlighting the legacy of Ambassador Diane E. Watson. [Source: Allan Zen]

because it took place at the Getty House, a symbol of power and influence in the city. It was a way to show appreciation for her dedicated service to the community and recognize her impact on politics, diplomacy, and advocacy. The event brought together friends, colleagues, and community members to remember her legacy in a special and meaningful way.