

Student Reporter

Santa Fe Christian’s Baseball Team: Dominican Republic



Aspen Lee

Grade 9

Santa Fe Christian Schools



Santa Fe Christian’s Varsity baseball team with some of the local Dominican Republic baseball players
[Source: Davis Lee]

For aspiring students in the Dominican Republic, playing for Major League Baseball (MLB) is their dream, and to play against any player from the United States is a step closer to this aspiration. Every three years, a local San Diego school, Santa Fe Christian Schools, sends the varsity baseball team to the DR to build facilities, repaint homes, and play ball with the athletes there.

This year, the baseball team stayed in San Pedro de Macoris,

Dominican Republic, for eight days, participating in baseball and community service activities. They stayed on the second floor of a school in San Pedro, spending the majority of their time at the school when they weren’t playing baseball or serving the outside community. Because the children in the DR didn’t regularly see Americans, they were all overjoyed to see the bus pull into their complex for the first time. Seeing their expressions when the team came outside to

meet them was a sight each of the players will never forget.

Throughout the week, the group of 21 high school baseball players left the school at 8 am every day and spent their mornings engaging in baseball activities, such as games, practices, or training sessions with the local team. They were able to face three local teams and a Washington DC, Varsity team that had a trip overlapping with Santa Fe Christian’s visit. Each of the San Diego baseball athletes was able to see what baseball meant to the teams there, which elevated their passion for the game as well. The ecstatic energy and talent to play the sport with the little opportunities and equipment became an eye-opening experience. Their attitudes and heart for baseball made the upperclassmen from the US more grateful for the facilities they’re able to use every day in California.

One particular moment that senior Davis Lee will never forget is, “When we were training with one of the local academies, an older player, who was 15 years old, asked to trade gloves with me. I had a new glove that I rarely used, but his old glove was in good

condition, so we practiced with each other’s gloves and eventually traded. I instantly connected with him, although the language barrier was evident, and I truly believe that this athlete would never forget this moment and always cherish the newer glove.” Davis still uses the glove in San Diego on the baseball field, and to him and the team, it symbolizes the relationships and bonds that the players were able to gain and grow during the short stay in the DR.

Besides the daily baseball activities, the team was able to not only donate their equipment and clothes, and support the local teams, but also paint homes and hand out clothing and food items to members of the communities. On their fourth day in the Dominican Republic, the baseball team was allowed to paint the local pastor’s house and renovate an entire park for the young children. Santa Fe Christian Junior Connor Sawyer mentioned, “This trip really helped us grow in our faith and with our coaches and other players. I will truly never forget the impact this had on me as a student, athlete, and teammate.”

Student Reporter

The Sparkling Trend That Doesn’t Fizz Out



Derrick Ahn

Grade 11

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Humans have many basic needs to be fulfilled to carry out their daily actions. Of those, hydration is one of the crucial needs, as it keeps our organs functioning. However, to many, water is essential but dull and boring, while sugary sodas and juices pose health threats. In recent times, the popularity of sparkling water, or carbonated water, has been propelled by its burning, enjoyably prickling sensations. This odd, sensational drink has grown to solidify its spot as a top contender to its base form, water. But why does this trend not “fizz” out?

Sparkling water, or carbonated water, was first aerated with carbon dioxide by a British doctor, William Brownrigg, in the 1740s, but only started being mass-produced



Some households love sparkling water to the point where they have a water carbonator to give them what they want with just a press of a button!
[Source: Author, Derrick Ahn]

for sale in 1781, followed by the manufacturing of sparkling water in actual soda bottles in 1783. However, the popularization of sparkling water only arose after it started gaining traction when ethnic groups such as the Germans and Italians rapidly consumed the drink.

Within the last decade, consumption of these effervescent beverages has quadrupled, and this trend does not seem to stop anytime soon. Soda beverages have an enormous market, but with recent trends toward a healthy lifestyle in the US, many are replacing these formerly beloved drinks with a new bubbly drink, carbonated water. In fact, the sparkling water market is expected to reach a whopping \$93.8

billion by 2030, almost tripling the same statistic in 2021.

To see what individuals thought of sparkling water, I interviewed a close friend of mine, Calvin, to see how he reacted his first time drinking it. He remarks, “It’s like spicy water... it has a weird tingly sensation, but it’s slowly growing on me.” Upon asking if he would rather drink sparkling water or its uncarbonated counterpart, he responded, “I would drink water over sparkling water.” However, his hand reached for another can of the sparkling version with a guilty face.

While centuries-old society has seen countless beverages, sparkling water truly provides a one-of-a-kind, unique experience that I hope everyone can appreciate.

Student Reporter

The Memorable Celebration of a Sweet 16



Claire Lee

Grade 10

La Canada High School

The tradition of a “Sweet 16” has always been a prevalent celebration in the life of a teenage girl, particularly as a step into adulthood. The concept has its roots in the Middle Ages at the onset of Queen Elizabeth I’s rule. During her reign, a culture of fashion and elegance was brought to life, and clothing became a staple in the woman’s lifestyle. Similarly, in the Victorian era, the tradition also exemplified the beginning of a woman’s introduction into society, as the standard for a young woman was to begin the pursuit of her marriage.

In today’s era, the tradition has been significantly modernized to fit contemporary standards. Common ceremonial traditions, such as the lighting of sixteen candles or wearing a pair of heels, demonstrate the milestone of reaching a new age of maturity. In my community, there are several ways that the sixteenth birthday is celebrated, whether it be a major family custom or an ordinary birthday party. Though outward-

ly, it may appear to be yet another birthday, the Sweet 16 holds the significance of our temporary embrace of youth and a new chapter being welcomed into our lives. Ostensibly, there is no sudden change in one’s life upon the aging of an additional year, yet it symbolizes the opening of various opportunities that once seemed unrealistic for a young girl. Ranging from being able to drive to merely having the knowledge that one has lived sixteen years of her life, many teenage girls find themselves in a position close to becoming a true adult.

Recently, I attended my friend’s Sweet 16, which captured the essence of this tradition, and I was able to enjoy the activities she had prepared for all of her friends. Being able to spend time with her in one of the most significant moments of her life was a great experience, though the celebration itself was momentary, yet memorable. During the party, we had the opportunity to engage in the amusing activities of deco-



Vivid decorations lighten up the mood at Eileen’s Sweet 16.
[Source: Vanessa Lee]

rating phone cases, conversing with one another, and ultimately feeling united under a common sense of growth and accomplishment. The events that took place were whimsical and contemporary, encapsulating the interests of today’s teenage girls, deviating from the outdated forms of entertainment in the past. Eileen Chu, who hosted the party, says that “a sweet sixteen is a celebration of one almost reaching adulthood and an unforgettable experience that will follow you forever.” Although the tradition has been greatly modified through generations, in many ways, it depicts



Cupcakes and cakes are neatly set up for the memorable celebration.
[Source: Eileen Chu]

how girls progress through their lives and are constantly growing alongside the societal norms within their era.

No Sweet 16 is ever the same; each one is unique, demonstrating how the premise of the tradition endures despite the distinct ways it is celebrated. Whether you choose to celebrate your sixteenth birthday simplistically or extravagantly, to celebrate is to recognize how you have come along this journey of your life.

Student Reporter

Juniors Prepping for SAT and the Change to the Digital Format



Zoe Lok
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Lake Oswego High School



Steps to prepare for the digest test can be found online through many different sites.
[Source: Author, Zoe Lok]

As the school year is ending, Juniors are mentally preparing themselves for the stressful college application process next year, which includes taking the SAT-, the standardized test used nationwide for college admissions- for some students. Especially for high achievers, some Ivy League schools are reinstating taking the SAT: Yale, Dartmouth, and MIT. Students applying to these Ivys, alongside other schools, must

take the dreaded SAT. As a junior this year, I have been prepping for the SAT for the last one and a half years in hopes of getting high marks on the test. The SAT will be changing its format, starting in March, from a paper-written test to an online digital adaptive test. The SAT may have simple concepts on the test in English and Math, but many have found that there are factors that make the test difficult, unlike any

test we usually take in school. Specific problems require immense concentration from students to pick out keywords that can be easily overlooked, and not fall into the trap of the College Board's formatting. Another new feature in the digital format is adaptive testing, which adapts to the student's performance by getting harder or easier.

Since deciding to take the digital SAT, I have pondered numerous questions that may occur. How will they know the point of each question if one may be more challenging than another? Does the SAT change based on the number of questions you get wrong or specific types of questions you missed? If students can test on their computers, how will they deal with having more options for cheating? Will they inspect everyone's devices? How will they deal with technical issues during the test? There are

many questions about this new format, all of which may not be answered.

As I planned to take the test on March 9th, I would be part of the first batch of students to do so with the new version, with hopes that it wouldn't malfunction or be interrupted; precautions were being taken, as students taking the exam had been told to block off 5 hours to take the test.

Unfortunately, on Monday, March 4th, an issue occurred at our school, and the exam had to be canceled. This posed even more questions for current Juniors regarding future SAT testing. Starting in the fall of 2024, we will begin our college applications, making it hard if we don't have the SAT done by then. In the next few months, as College Board continues to experiment with the digital format, problems may still occur during testing before it becomes smooth sailing.

Student Reporter

What's So Special about a Boba?



Sain Kim
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Nowadays, with the endless array of delicious cookies, pastries, and cakes, especially in the Los Angeles and Orange County, California, areas, I've always found it fascinating how a simple drink of all things seems to be the most popular form of an after-dinner snack. A drink, dessert, snack, or whatever you call it, there is no doubt that boba has seemed to infiltrate popular culture and influence how people see and consume their food. Whether it's a treat you get for yourself every once in a while or an addiction that must be fulfilled, boba is a unique addition to the various sweet treats people consume.

To understand its rise and popularity we first have to understand what boba is, where it originates, and how it is made. Originating in Taiwan by two



Brown Sugar Milk with Boba at Actor/ Music Artist Donald Glover's boba shop called Jellyman located in Silverlake, Los Angeles. [Source: Sarah Nguyen]

competing tea shops, each respectively creating forms of the beloved drink, boba is usually a sweet tea-based drink that often includes a base of small bite-sized

tapioca balls, or pearls, within the drink as a complement. Though there is a vast variety of what "boba" is, the most simple definition comes down to this. After that, you may be asking what tapioca balls are exactly. Well, these are a condiment made from tapioca starch, brown sugar, and water. These ingredients then become a dough that is cut into bite-sized balls and cooked in a brown sugar syrup, making them warm and chewy, and a perfect condiment for a refreshing drink. Although boba is typically used for tea-based drinks, they aren't limited to them! Tapioca pearls have been seen in a lot of different drink bases and a lot of different desserts. From fruit slushies to ice cream floats, and even shaved ice, these pearls have become a mainstay in many modern desserts.

Now that we understand what boba is, maybe it's easier to see why it has become so popular, especially in the LA and OC areas. Learning boba originated from Taiwan and uses a tea-based drink, shows its original demographic was the Asian market. Similarly, if we look at the LA and OC demographics we can see a dominating Asian culture in those areas. Take Koreatown in LA, for example. It is one of the largest hotspots for an Asian-based population, hence, we see a large influx of boba popularity in the area. Apart from this, we also see that boba is now used as a symbol of popularity and trendiness. Lately, many people have started to commute long distances just to get pretty and colorful-looking desserts, and boba is definitely one of these special desserts that people go feral for.

Student Reporter

Daeboreum Korean Celebration: Let's Look at the Moon



Aidan Bang
Grade 11
John Marshall High School

Driving home late at night after my parents had picked my sister up from college for the weekend, I was ready to just fall asleep for the ride home. However, my mom told me to look outside the window. I was interested in what she wanted me to see, so I did, and I was met with a surprise.

If you were out on the night of February 24, you would have had the chance to see the giant supermoon. For Koreans, days like these are classified under the festival known as Daeboreum.

Daeboreum, or the Great Moon Festival, is a festival in which Koreans celebrate the first full moon of the new year of the Korean lunar calendar. This festival's main purpose is to promote unity and establish a community by bringing people closer together. It's a festival centered around agriculture, therefore having key components that revolve around this theme.

Like many other festivals, there

are foods that are prepared to celebrate the event. According to a former Korean citizen, Jina Kim, "It's a common belief that eating walnuts during this time of the year brings good fortune to you." It's not only walnuts however, as peanuts, chestnuts, and pine nuts all have the same effect. We had no walnuts at home, but we did have peanuts to work with. Nuts aren't the only thing prepared as vegetables are another food presented. As mentioned earlier, the festival is centered around agriculture. A special dish named Jinchae is created with vegetables dried from the summer. These vegetables consist of squash, mushrooms, turnips, and many others. Apparently the meaning behind this dish is to protect farmers from the summer heat. Another dish developed for good fortune in harvest is called Ogok-bap. This dish is created with red and black beans, sticky rice, and millets. It is supposed to be made for abundant and bountiful harvests, as the



The full moon during Daeboreum is a beautiful sight to see.
[Source: Author, Aidan Bang]

ingredients represent just that. As a Korean American, I thought that I knew a lot about the history of my own culture. However, this was a festival that I had just learned about, thanks to my mom. It was pretty surprising to see that Daeboreum was a time thing to celebrate this huge supermoon. I knew about the variety of holidays and events cir-

cling around agriculture in Korea, but I never knew about this one until now. Learning about this festival only made me more curious and intrigued about what other parts of my culture I don't know. This allowed me to understand the importance of uncovering parts of your culture that you never knew about to get closer to your own ethnicity.