

## Editors Column

## Twelve Years in the Making



Sean Kim  
Grade 12  
Los Alamitos High School



Sharing my voice with thousands was an unforgettable experience at my high school graduation! [Source: Author, Sean Kim]

High school graduation: a day which is as impossibly melancholy as it is triumphant. After twelve years of school, Los Alamitos seniors find themselves in a proper mix of overjoyed and bittersweet emotions, relieved that school is finally over and simultaneously regretful for what could have been better. In a moment of retrospection and prospection, life feels more and more confusing -- what roads have we taken,

and what paths lie ahead?

During the graduation ceremony, I had the great privilege of sharing my thoughts with my equally bewildered peers. As I struggled to write the first draft of my speech, I walked through campus, recalling the countless memories I made alongside fellow graduates. Staying up until midnight working on a group presentation. Setting personal records in the final track meet of the season. Getting

a whole leg workout climbing up to the third story for Math and Biology. These endearing moments flooded into my memory as I brainstormed.

And they returned again before the mic on stage. Standing behind the podium, I took a moment to gaze at the thousands of parents, siblings, and other guests sitting in the stands around me. Despite multiple practice runs, my hands became cold and clammy, and I felt a cough coming on. I remember awkwardly adjusting the golden tassel of my cap behind my right ear as my nerves grew. In front of me lay my speech, already printed out from start to finish, though I had memorized most of it. I took a deep breath and began.

To the great class of 2024, I voiced sentiments I believed relatable to everyone, stretching from the excitement of Homecoming, Prom, and other big events to the quiet wholesomeness of daily school life. Starting my speech on a high note, I reminded peers to celebrate the end of the testing season and the start of the “best summer

of our lives.” To my friends in the audience, I gave a big thank you for forming wonderful memories at Los Alamitos High School. Winding down, I brought the focus back to our futures and emphasized the importance of acknowledging the crucial, tireless efforts of staff, faculty, parents, and many more who gave each and every one of us the chance to shape our futures.

Reminiscing on the opportunities we have grabbed and lost, obstacles we have overcome and failed, and the poignant, thrilling, tremendous journey we have undertaken, I delivered my final message: “To the great class of 2024, ... Celebrate like never before. Focus not on what you could’ve done but rather on what you did do. And have a great summer. Thank you.”

That night, Los Alamitos seniors reflected on both our least and most favorite moments of the past twelve years of school and bid a silent goodbye with a celebratory cap toss. I will never forget the incredible community and family I had at Los Alamitos High School.

## Student Reporter

## Goodbye, Seniors! What’s Up, Newbies?



Reanna Lee  
Grade 9  
North Hollywood High School

Many students in Los Angeles may have heard of North Hollywood High School for their many entertaining events. However, there is so much work needed to prepare for them! Luckily, the Associated Student Body is there to lend a hand! This amazing team of students is always on top of handling the school’s events and social work. Examples include the annual homecoming party, pep rally, and club rush.

The ASB, an acronym for Associated Student Body, at North Hollywood High, held applications in March, and over 80 students applied. Out of these 80, I was one of only fifteen students who got in! When I found out that I was admitted, I felt confident that my hard work had paid off. Soon after, in June, the ASB banquet would take place, where the new president and vice president’s speech and senior team graduation would occur.



The current ASB team in the agriculture area during the banquet held for them by North Hollywood High. [Source: Areli Martin]

This banquet helped me get closer to the rest of the ASB group and even allowed me to make new friends. Tables and chairs were set up in the agriculture area—outdoors—where everyone could enjoy the sun. Dinner was served at 4 pm, and we were served tacos! A dessert bar consisted of cake, watermelon, lemon bars, and mini muffins followed. The graduating seniors passed down their roles to the new members. Our new presi-

dent, Areli, and vice presidents, Sean and Tatiana, also made speeches dedicated to the leaving members, showing their love and appreciation for them. Although seeing the seniors leave was a bit sad, I was excited for them, as a new journey into college awaited.

New members, like me, also had a chance to get on the stage, to swear the ASB oath. This part made me really feel like I was finally a part of the team. We each

received a rose from a senior member and took a group picture. That also gave us the chance to meet the leaving students, even though we weren’t there to work with them.

At the end of the event, everyone took pictures with their committee, a sub-group in ASB that is in charge of a specific category at the school. For example, I am on the event committee, where we plan and host events like homecoming and the talent show. Other committees include spirit, public relations, and fundraising. The event category was my top choice, so I am very grateful ASB decided to accept me into the role.

This banquet has given me the opportunity to meet so many of my peers and have fun. I can already tell that next year will be a good one, and that ASB will be a wonderful thing in my life. As high school goes on, I don’t think I will ever forget this day.

## Student Reporter

## Getting A Head Start In High School



Olivia Shin  
Grade 8  
Granada Hills Charter Middle School

High school. It’s one of the scariest things a shy girl like me could encounter. I start high school this year and am terrified about the new schedule, new people, and, especially, a brand-new school. I come from a tiny middle school, and entering a big high school like mine can be very intimidating. Fortunately, I got a chance to see a glimpse of what my school will look and feel like. Granada Hills Charter has a program for incoming ninth graders to get a feel of what it will be like to learn and be in a real high school. This program is called STA (Summer Transition Academy).

During STA, students will be able to get to know their classmates and experience their new environment. I am very grateful for this program because I can navigate my way through high school without being so nervous about not knowing where my classes will be or what friends I’ll sit with at lunch. During STA, I’ll

be able to meet new people and make more friends. Since my middle school is connected to the high school, a lot of my friends from my previous school are coming to do STA as well. Although I enjoy being with my friends, I also want to get to know more people instead of staying with the same group of friends all the time. STA is a great way to do that because you are placed in cohorts where you will take English and Math classes together.

These English and Math classes are created in order to prepare incoming ninth graders for the types of classes there will be at the high school. Meeting new teachers is also a great opportunity to get to know the school more. By meeting my new teachers I can create earlier relationships that continue throughout my four years in high school.

In STA students will pick out specific classes and electives. My middle school did not provide any



Caption A: Granada Hills Charter is the high school I will be doing STA at and attending this upcoming school year. [Source: Author, Olivia Shin]

electives for students to take. High school is getting more exciting when I realize all of the opportunities I can take through classes, clubs, and electives. The electives I want to focus on are the ones about writing. That is why my first choice is to join the school newspaper. Another elective I am interested in is the yearbook. Since I have prior experience from being on the yearbook club last year at my middle school, I think it will also be a

good elective for me to continue. However, there are so many more things that I can do to expand my opportunities throughout high school.

Being in STA will help with building new relationships and opportunities in high school. I can feel less nervous about my first day of high school, knowing that I will make plenty of new friends and opportunities over the summer through STA.

Student Reporter

## USMA West Point SLE 2024



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



I was able to view, up close, the Me-devac (medic) helicopter used in the Army.

[Source: Author, Eunice Minji Choi]

This summer, I was privileged to attend the United States Military Academy at West Point's Summer Leadership Experience. This week-long program started on June 8 and ended on June 14. I was very worried prior to the program, but now, it is safe to say that it was one of the best experiences I've ever had. The week consisted of academic workshops, military training, physical training, and squad bonding.

USMA West Point, the na-

tion's first engineering school, was founded in 1802 by Thomas Jefferson to embrace both education and military training for young people. Some notable alumni include Ulysses S. Grant, Douglas MacArthur, and Dwight D. Eisenhower. The cadets of West Point played big roles in the wars America had in the past.

The first day at West Point was definitely one of the most stressful moments during the week. As soon as we arrived on campus, the Sergeants started yelling at us, getting us in order. I was flustered because I didn't know the training started the moment we arrived. I was also worried that the Sergeants would be this strict throughout the entire week. We were given a Cadet Knowledge Book, where we had to memorize songs, statements, weapons, and the phonetic alphabet. We went through a mock Reception Day (R-Day) where we learned drills, marching, and how to report to the Cadet in the Red Sash. At the moment, it was very stressful and intimidating, but looking back on it, it was an amazing experience that gave me insight into Cadet experiences.

I was placed in the 2nd Platoon 5th Squad, the platoon led by Sergeant Clymer and the squad led by Sergeant Rutherford.

The second day was the Candidate Fitness Assessment, also known as CFA, a physical fitness test required to attend West Point. Although it is only about 10% of the application process, if you fail the test, you cannot attend West Point. It consisted of basketball throws, pull-ups, shuttle runs, sit-ups, push-ups, and a mile run. Our platoon was unfortunate and had to run the mile in the rain. It was one of the most physically demanding activities I've ever done, but it was a great experience. After the CFA, we ate lunch and attended a few briefings.

Monday and Wednesday were academic days, where each day, we attended 2 classes of our choice. I attended the Leadership and Ethics, Mathematics, Electrical Engineering, and Chemistry and Life Sciences workshops. The day started at 5:30 am with physical training, where we did all sorts of exercises. Then we had breakfast and 3 hour-long academic workshops, having meals in

between. We also attended briefings and had intramurals as well. I made my own "robot," interacted with Spot, an agile, mobile robot, and made chemical compounds.

Tuesday and Thursday were military days, where we got military training experiences. On MIL Day 1 (Tuesday), we repelled down a wall, had medical training, learned combatives, and toured the campus and helicopters. MIL Day 2 started at 5:00 am to move to Camp Buckner, an actual Cadet training camp. We went through multiple obstacle courses, field training, leadership training, and static displays. The MIL days weren't as physically demanding as I expected, so I was glad. Both days' meals were MREs, which weren't the best, but edible.

Our graduation was on Friday, and I was disappointed the camp had ended so soon. The week was filled with pain, shin splints, education, and training. This camp made me realize that West Point is an amazing school with a beautiful campus and legendary history. I will definitely apply this year. Go Army, Beat Navy!

Student Reporter

## High School and College Students from Oregon Visit Fujian, China



**Zoe Lok**  
Grade 11  
Lake Oswego High School

A group of 16 Oregon high school and college students participated in a cultural exchange between Oregon and Fuzhou, the sister states.

Upon arrival on March 25th, students from Oregon and students from Fuzhou University together travel around the Fuzhou province to exchange cultures and learn about the history of Fuzhou. The Oregon Youth Delegation to China is formed by students from Oregon State University, Brown University, Lake Oswego High School, and other high schools, colleges, and universities; two students are currently attending Lake Oswego High School, which include me, Zoe Lok, as well as two former students who attend Oregon State and Brown University. They were invited under the initiative of Xi Jinping to invite American teenagers to China for a cultural exchange and study.

Toward the end of the cultural exchange, on March 28th, the delegation of The American Youth Tour to Fujian China met with the director



On March 28th, after a formal dinner with Director Lin Li of the Foreign Affairs Office of Fujian Province, the Oregon delegates got the chance to chat with Director Lin Li and take the trendy 0.5 photo as well! [Source: Jasmine Liu]

of the Foreign Affairs Office of Fujian Province. Director Lin Li welcomed the Oregon Youth Delegates and celebrated the 40th anniversary of the friendly relations between Oregon and Fujian with a formal dinner. He wished that the Oregon delegates would be able to learn more about Fujian culture and help promote the century-old friendship



On March 25th, an introductory dinner was held for everyone to introduce themselves and officially begin the program.

[Source: Author, Zoe Lok]

from generation to generation.

As a participant and delegate of this exchange, I can say that it was an excellent experience learning about the culture in Fujian. At first, prior to the exchange, I was nervous because I was on the younger spectrum as a high school student since most of the participants were college students, and the Fuzhou students were also college students. My Chinese has also been slowly getting worse because I don't get many chances to speak it, but going to Fuzhou allowed me to practice and improve

even more. I also became friends with many of the Oregon delegates, as well as the Fuzhou University students, whom I still talk to or hang out with today. If given this opportunity again, I wouldn't hesitate to attend since this experience was both enlightening and enjoyable, and I hope to go on a similar cultural trip.

John Lin, one of the program coordinators who was the former president of the Chinese Friendship Association of Portland, has shared some of his thoughts, "The exchange program went really well and exceeded my expectations; the students from the US were able to witness and experience the profoundness of Chinese culture, through the trip to Fujian, China, they got the opportunity to understand traditional Chinese culture and help promote international culture exchanges between China and US." He added, "The students liked the cultural exchange so much... some of them have been asking when the next trip will be."

Student Reporter

## A Morning Group Run At Redondo Beach, CA



**James Lim**  
Grade 11  
Francisco Bravo Medical Magnet High School

Recently, a new form of social gathering has taken rise and is all the craze in the media. Run clubs have become popular this year for those looking to meet new people with a shared lifestyle. On Saturday, June 22, Elava Active Club had an event at Redondo Beach, California, where participants could run three miles, take a cold plunge, and then have breakfast together at a local cafe.

At 7:30 in the morning, members of the Elava Active Club gradually began showing up to where the run would take place. Attendees wore name tags to make socializing easier. People broke off into separate groups where there was small talk and conversation as they waited for more people to gather.

Around 8:00, the event organizer led the group through a few stretches and warm-ups and also went over the course details. At

the start of the run, there were approximately 70 people, and everyone ran at their own pace. There was no pressure to be fast, as there was a variety of experience levels throughout the club. Everyone encouraged and congratulated one another after the run; the atmosphere was positive and the vibes were electric.

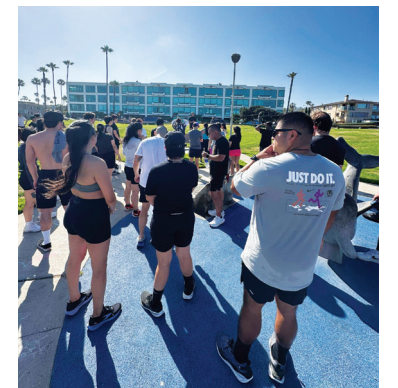
The run itself was one lap going from the original meeting point, down the street, and then back along the beach path towards where the run started. It was surprisingly busy out, with many people out to take in the sun, walk their dogs, and ride their bikes. However, the run was manageable and everyone was able to navigate around the route with ease.

Once everyone had finished the route, the coordinator discussed the optional cold plunge. This part of the event would be a dip in

the shore for around ten minutes. It was only 70 degrees out at the time, but despite this, many people jumped right in. People got out and rinsed off by the showers and got ready for the next portion of the event.

Right after the beach dip, the group headed towards a local cafe to enjoy some coffee and breakfast. Offset Coffee Roasters was only five minutes away and was another opportunity for people to get to know one another. Many runners were local and hadn't had anything to eat before the run, so it was a nice way to end the meet.

Elava Active Club hosts similar events each Saturday, normally around 8:00 in the morning, along with other activities such as trail runs and bouldering. Many of the events take place around the Redondo Beach and LAX area, but occasionally, some activities



Elava Active Club gathers around as they prepare for a thrilling 3-mile run alongside the Redondo coastline.

[Source: Author, James Lim]

occur near the Hollywood area as well.

Despite their labels, run clubs are just another social get-together. The environment is friendly, and many attendees go to meet new people. There are several similar groups like Elava local to Koreatown, Ca, and many of these groups also partake in these events.