

Editors Column

Calling All Seniors! Ready to Make Some Memories?



Hannah Lee
Grade 12
South High School



Decorating 4-cut photos to fit into a scrapbook or senior memory box is a great way to look back at all the memories!

[Source: Author, Hannah Lee]

To all of the upcoming seniors, including myself, it is quite unbeliev-

able that we are almost at the end of our high school years. Not only does graduating high school feel beyond belief, but the community and schools that we have attended since a young age will now soon be a separate chapter from our future endeavors. There will probably be many happy moments, regrets, moments of laughter, and a mix of emotions altogether. That being said, it is crucial to note all these moments together with family, friends, and significant others. Down below are some ways that you can do so!

The first way is to make a senior memory box. This box will hold all your happy and/or memorable moments from the entire year. This could be a 4-cut photo from homecoming, a picture you took with your friends at senior sun-

rise, a 100% on an important test, and much more. The list goes on and on! Meeting up with friends to discuss and decorate your own respective boxes is a good idea for a function! It is fun, can be simple, and will hold memories that can last a lifetime.

A second idea is writing letters to your future self that you can read at the end of your senior year or possibly the beginning of your freshman year at college. This letter may include college plans, future plans with friends and family, or just a simple letter regarding having a joyful life. Such small activities as a rising senior with friends can mean a lot to you in the future or remind you of old memories.

The last activity that you can do is to begin making a scrapbook.

Starting with memories from freshman year, you can mark different chapters in the scrapbook and have lots of fun with friends to organize and look back on all of the changes that have happened. Over the years, it is natural to have changed vastly, and it will be tons of fun to look back at the past, laugh over funny photos, and become nostalgic for the memories you will miss.

Through these different senior activities, not only is it possible to have fun with friends in the moment but also to live in those memories in the future. These scrapbooks, letters, and memory boxes will mean much to look through as a college student, post-graduation, and just as a chapter of our lives.

So, why don't you try it out?

Student Reporter

My Journey at SYMF's 62nd Annual Competition



Abigail Ro
Grade 9
Yorba Linda High School

Annually, the Southwestern Youth Music Festival takes place at CSU Long Beach, where younger musicians ages five to nineteen have the opportunity to compete in eight different categories. These musicians, including myself, showcase our talents and connect and grow with our fellow performers.

SYMF is an annual music competition in Southern California. This year, spreading over two weekends in July, the festival featured various categories in piano, strings, and wind instruments. After competing, I gained priceless experience that one could only achieve by performing.

My morning began at 8 am, to the sound of my alarm. Unfortunately, it was the worst night I've had in days. The stress had significantly affected my daily life, such as accidentally dropping my phone and consequently breaking it, mood fluctuations, loss of appetite, and poor sleep quality. I was relieved when the day of my competition finally arrived, hoping it would



After getting my trophy, I took a photo next to a wall that says "Bob Cole Conservatory of Music".

[Source: Author, Abigail Ro]

ease my anxiety. I ate breakfast and practiced my piece, Allegretto from Carnival de Venise, Op.14 (Gémin, Paul-Agricole), for an hour before leaving. No matter how much I practiced, I didn't feel the sense of security as I did compared to the previous year. I prepared to leave and packed my bag with my flute, music, powder, headphones, and water.

After an hour of practice, my

mom and I left for the competition. Upon arriving at the CSULB's Bob Cole Conservatory of Music, I observed many musicians practicing throughout campus. My teacher hadn't arrived yet, so I found a spot outside of the practice rooms where I could warm-up before my performance. I had brought headphones to wear and listened to the piano accompaniment as I practiced. My teacher found me, listened to my

performance, and provided feedback. Unfortunately, I competed with another girl she taught, and she soon left to help her.

Later, the performers in my category gathered in one room. As we entered, I was amazed at how spacious it was. I was delighted because my flute displays sound better in large rooms. Because my call number was five, I anxiously watched the four people before me perform, trying to keep my anxiety at a low level. As I performed, I tried to concentrate on my dynamics and completely disregarded one part, resulting in a mistake. Sadly, I placed third.

This year's 62nd annual Southwestern Youth Music Festival was a remunerative experience. Despite feeling anxious and making mistakes, I learned valuable lessons and gained priceless experience. I am grateful for the chance to participate in such a prestigious event, and I look forward to using this experience to improve and grow as a musician in the future.

Student Reporter

Teaching Swim to Special Needs Students



David Han
Grade 11
Woodbridge High

While California provides multitudes of swimming opportunities and adequate funding for children and adults who wish to swim or be involved in an aquatic setting, these circumstances are often rare for individuals with special needs. Cities overlook the funding needed to support special needs programs or may not fund them at all. Often, in large cities and neighborhoods, a majority of the funding goes to public programs. However, special needs programs are often overlooked and underfunded, putting greater stress on parents who are unable to send their children to places where they can learn life-saving and enriching skills like swimming. Furthermore, this problem is exacerbated in underdeveloped or lower-income areas that already struggle to provide funding for public projects and programs.

To address the shortage, I decided that starting a swimming program in my community would be beneficial and necessary. The program would provide a safe and encouraging environment for

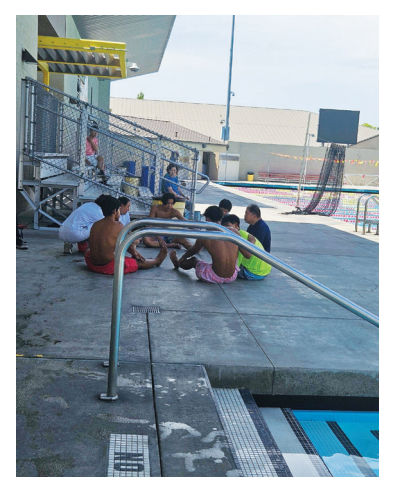
special needs students who would be taught vital swimming skills like floating, kicking, and breath-holding by lifeguard-certified and experienced high school coaches who receive volunteer hours in return. Therefore, with this program, we have been able to utilize the summertime and my high school pool as a safe space where special needs students can lose their fear of the water and become comfortable with swimming and floating.

Aside from learning new skills, participants of the program are also introduced to a variety of equipment and games to help them exercise their aquatic skills. Some of the equipment we use are kickboards, floaties, and sinkable objects like rings and torpedoes. These equipment pieces help our students to challenge themselves and incorporate multiple skills like stroking, swimming, and holding their breath underwater to reach a sinking ring or torpedo. Another benefit of our program is directed towards the parents, who can leave or watch their child for



Participating in a fun game like ring-toss allows students to practice swim skills.

[Source: Author, David Han]



Instructors and students gather in a circle to stretch and get ready for the water.

[Source: Author, David Han]

the duration of the lessons without the stress of needing to hire a private instructor or travel far out to seek a similar program. All of our classes also incorporate necessary bodily movements, like static and dynamic stretches, where students can relax and prepare their muscles for the pool while preventing muscle cramps and uneasiness when entering the water.

Furthermore, this swimming opportunity provides the perfect environment for students to

bond with their instructors or other students, allowing socialization alongside exercise. So far, throughout the summer, we have been able to teach our students critical basic skills like floating, kicking, stroking, and breath holding, while diminishing their fears of the water. Seeing all the positive progress, I believe that many students and aquatic organizations should also consider starting recreational programs for special needs students.

Student Reporter

Is Generation Alpha Doomed?



Chloe Je
Grade 9
Orange County School
of the Arts



Gen Alpha has the entire internet ready for them. This includes the good and the bad, and unfortunately, Gen Alpha seems to spiral down the bad.
[Source: Author, Chloe Je]

What's the first thing that comes to mind when someone says "Gen Alpha?" Maybe it's the kids that are constantly on their devices, or ten year olds roaming Sephora. Following Gen Z, concern for the future of our world is growing. With 2.8 million children born

every week, this is to become the most populated generation yet. But exactly why do all the other generations think that Gen Alpha is doomed? And is it possible to be fixed?

Generation Alpha is the newest generation, meaning they have all of the comforts of growing up with technology. Currently, 80% of all children have some form of a tablet, most infamously the iPad, hence their nickname, the "iPad kids."

When the pandemic rolled around, the problem of the internet raising our youth became apparent. Their dependence only grew worse as kids were isolated alone in their houses with minimal contact with the outside world. Or, that is, until they discover the internet. During this time, the internet allowed chil-

dren to communicate with others anytime, anywhere, with anyone. As screens became their whole world, they grew to adapt to this new lifestyle.

Now, internet usage is not in itself a bad thing. However, the content Generation Alpha is consuming is full of negative media. With things like brain rot content and Elsatage, the internet is damaging young developing minds. Media targeting Generation Alpha, and made specifically for high views, usually utilize hyperstimulation. Hyperstimulation is when videos utilize fast-paced storytelling, loud and colorful visual effects, and other eye-catching tools. Hyperstimulation also causes low attention spans in children, which affects their school lives.

Social media also has a negative

impact. Children end up spending exorbitant amounts of money on products they don't need, as they are fooled by advertisements. They dress and participate in trends that are not appropriate for their age. The internet seems to be ruining the future of our society.

So, is Generation Alpha really doomed? Well, no. With a new generation comes a new set of problems with raising kids. Technology is just one of them. Children of Generation Alpha have the entire world at their fingertips, which can be an infinite well of knowledge. Whether they can manage a good experience is up to the guardians, to them, and to us. The iPad Kids are still kids, and they have much growing up to do. It is not too late to turn this around.

Student Reporter

Playing Piano for the Residents of the Alcott Rehabilitation Hospital



Jiyeon Hwang
Grade 12
John Marshall High School

Nursing homes, facilities that provide year-round medical care for those who are unable to care for themselves at home, are often associated with senior citizens entering the later stages of their lives. In late July of 2024, at the Alcott Rehabilitation Hospital located in K-town, a beautiful musical performance of some simple hymns for some of the residents at the nursing home took place. At the start of the day, the volunteers arrived at the nursing home and entered the hospital wearing a mask to ensure the safety of those living there as well as the performers themselves.

While walking down the hallway, the group saw several elderly in one room all lying down, sleeping. Following the entrance, they entered a lively and bright room filled with small artworks, perhaps done by children. That day, around five people who visit



Jiyeon Hwang (Author) plays the piano for the elderly at the Alcott Rehabilitation Hospital.
[Source: Author, Jiyeon Hwang]

the hospital monthly, along with their pastor, were accompanied by the volunteer while the elderly received a sermon; their condition no longer allowed them to go to church weekly to receive God's word. Even those not Christian listened to the Pastor's words and observed the elderly around them. All of the senior citizens were in wheelchairs, silently listening to the pastor's words, and it left all

those listening and observing with a bittersweet feeling.

These elderly may be near the end of their lives, but seeing the pastor preaching so passionately made me even more nervous to perform in front of everyone. Once the pastor finished her sermon, she called me up, and I briefly introduced myself before sitting at the piano. I took a deep breath and began to play, and in

the end, I made a few small mistakes. Even with those mistakes, I hope that I brought even a little bit more joy to their hearts.

As I was performing for the elderly, they reminded me of my grandma back in Korea, who also resides in a nursing home. It has been nearly 5 years since I have seen her, and to this day, I wish to see her one last time before she passes on. Additionally, it had also made me think about my life; the thought that one day my parents could also be admitted to a nursing home had brought shivers down my body. Through this visit to the nursing home, I was reminded of how precious the time spent with one's parents is before they are no longer by their side. I only wish that these seniors will live their peaceful days out, and if I had given them even a little change to their repetitive days I would call it a success.

Student Reporter

Summer Camps at Northwood High School



Tiffany Park
Grade 9
Northwood High School

This summer, Northwood High School held many summer camps and various tryouts. There were camps for sports, electives, and even academic clubs over the course of the last couple of months. It was unbelievable to see how many students were at school in the middle of summer break, preparing for their new school year.

Speech and debate was a popular choice out of all of the summer camps, and on the first day, the students participating got a brief explanation of the subcategories within Speech & Debate, and they would choose which category they would like to try out. It was difficult to choose, but eventually, each student decided to try out their favorite, which, for many, was congressional debate. They didn't do many activities on the first day, but were ensured that they'd actually learn about congressional debate and get time to prepare for the mock tournament on the last day.

After debate camp ended, girls' tennis tryouts for the school team were occurring, so some students went to watch them. It was a short walk to the court, but the blazing sun made it feel like one was melt-



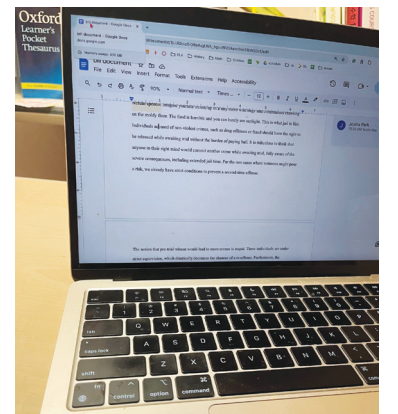
Northwood High School students competing for a spot in the girl's varsity tennis team over the summer.
[Source: Author, Tiffany Park]

ing. Freshman student Ashley had mentioned she felt bad for the students doing an outdoor sport in this weather. Watching the girls play through the metal wires around the tennis court amazed many by with their quick reflexes and the power they put into hitting each ball across the net. Making Northwood High School's girl's tennis team seems to be tough competition.

Following this, during the second day of debate camp, members watched examples of high school congressional debates and real congressional debates. The rules were explained once again; the

student congressional debate was where individuals would act like a senator and debate over whether a bill should be passed or not. Each person would come up and give a speech under 3 minutes on why they think the bill should be passed or declined. From there, a crossfire session would occur for 30 seconds per speaker to question their opinion. This would continue until everybody had given their speech and went through their crossfire session. The debate would end with final voting over whether the bill should be passed or not.

On the third day, the entire day



Writing a speech for the mock congressional debate held on the last day of the Speech & Debate camp.
[Source: Author, Tiffany Park]

was used for preparation for the mock tournament on the fourth and final day. Once the day of the mock tournament came, and the students decided on the order, some messed up on certain parts of the debate, like the speech and the crossfire session. I participated in this camp, and after volunteering to go first, the two sections didn't go as I had prepared, but I gladly had the chance to make up for it on the next debate topic. After all the tournaments were over, everyone at the camp was rewarded with a pizza party and they all were thankful that they joined the camp for the memorable experience.

Online Submission

Living in Korea as a Foreigner: A Rosy or Bumpy Experience?



Brian Oh
Grade 12
Dwight School Seoul



If you're craving a smoke, be careful where you do it! Overseas, things can be much different.

[Source: Author, Hyun Min Oh]

The moment you land abroad at an airport is always accompanied by a melange of different sentiments: the excitement and the anxiety at all the serendipities awaiting you. You timidly look around, and the unequivocal differences seep into you; everything, including the language and people's demeanor, is

different. Even the air tastes alien. You feel disoriented, maybe even overwhelmed, but there's only one way to break through that: by keeping an open mind. These vertigos are precisely what makes living abroad so glamorous.

Just as you step out of the airport and casually light a cigarette you may have been craving, the airport security hastily halts you and waves you over to a container box. You're puzzled—dozens of people are crammed, hazy with cigarette fumes. There's your first lesson in Korea: don't smoke in public! If you're incredulous, wait until you are fined 200 times the price of your cigarette. Only 1 in 40 streets are legal smoking areas; the probability of happening to be on one is as low as drawing that one Ace in a full deck of cards. Koreans, now being tech-savvy, have come up with apps like "Cloud Room Alert" to in-

dicating the smoking areas near you.

With your first attempt at smoking ending up a fiasco, you're having second thoughts about Korea, but it's not as draconian as it seems. Try taking out your kids or pets to the streets or the traditional markets. While strolling, you are suddenly surrounded by elders, handing "pocket money" to your kids. It might take you by surprise at first, but this is simply a gesture of the deeply ingrained concept of 정 (Jeong) culture. Korean culture has a different degree of proximity with the elders, so much so that it is common to call them "grandma" and "grandpa" on first encounters.

Nonetheless, don't let the phrase "stranger danger" slip from your mind because of the benevolence of "grandmas." South Korea brims with obscure cults that claim to cleanse your "tainted spirit." They come up with a myriad of maneu-

vers on how to allure you. Some pretend to be lost and ask for directions, or others just cut to the chase and announce that your "spirit looks exhausted." As baffling as it is, you will come up with your own comebacks to these remarks—I tend to just respond to them in a matter-of-fact and apathetic tone. When you are no longer baffled by these encounters, you will realize you are getting used to Korea's society.

Living abroad is indubitably an overwhelming experience. It is a series of vertigos, assimilating new culture, and returning to our childhood years in a sense. However, these eye-opening experiences are what make us transcend our own boundaries. And when you finally take comfort in your new refuge in a foreign country, you will find yourself a more resilient person.

Online Submission

The Importance of CPR in Saving Lives



Yejoon Choi
Grade 10
Northwood High School

Technology regarding medical aid and our arsenal against the millions of pathogens and diseases in America were honed and developed so that thousands of diseases known previously to mankind as incurable have been conquered. However, complications of cardiovascular diseases claim hundreds of thousands of lives in America each year. Advancements in medical and drug-related technology have caused an upsurge in the already prevalent drugs to be more potent and often harmful and dangerous to your cardiovascular health. Not only that, fast foods, as most may know, are not only popular but can be a considerable detriment to one's health, especially with things such as too much intake of cholesterol that can cause your circulatory system to be unable to function and cause an onset of cardiovascular diseases and symptoms. Usually, this malfunction would cause a stroke/cardiac arrest, where the heart is unable to beat in the regular rhythm it receives from the brain. Then, the heart will no longer be able to cycle the oxygen-rich and oxygenless blood properly, and blood will be unable to head to where it is needed,

such as vital organs like the brain. If such a situation were to go on, those who experienced this stroke could suffer permanent damage to some of their organs or even die.

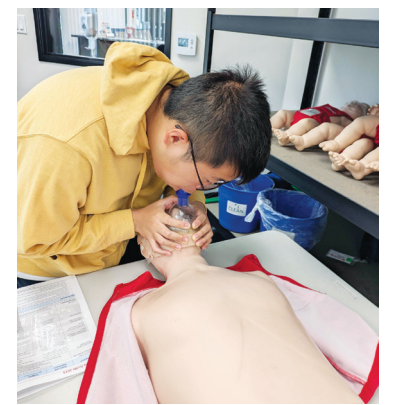
One invention created to combat this heart failure is a type of machine called an AED, or Automatic Electronic Defibrillator. It applies an electric shock to restore the normal heart rhythm. Usually, a building of proper finance or areas like a school or a hospital might have an AED, and the methods of using the machine involve turning it on and correctly reading the instructions on what to do to the victim of heart failure. Since the instructions are very precise, unless you are very experienced in handling the AED, following them line by line is recommended to ensure they work as intended. The AED is an electricity-related device, so using it when the victim is soaking wet or when you are sitting near it in a puddle of water might be dangerous for both you and the victim.

Regardless of whatever purpose, leaving a person currently undergoing a cardiac arrest/stroke unattended would be very dangerous, and although getting an AED as fast as

possible could save the person's life, it could also endanger them if their condition were to worsen while you were out looking for a machine. In regard to ensuring time for somebody on the scene to get the AED, the more well-known tactic against heart disease, CPR, must be used.

CPR, short for cardiopulmonary resuscitation, is a technique to be used on people who are experiencing a stroke/cardiac arrest. It is a series of chest compressions and "rescue breaths" done to make up for the lack of oxygen and blood flow from the malfunction of the heart and, occasionally, the lungs. Before doing CPR, it is necessary to know and understand that CPR can only make up to a fraction of your actual body's efficiency in delivering blood, and finding an AED or calling 911 should be done simultaneously on somebody who is confirmed to be having a stroke/cardiac arrest.

For further information and specifics on how CPR should be done and the immediate response one should take once somebody is suspected of having a stroke/cardiac arrest, you can go to various websites such as the American Red Cross and



An example of providing "rescue breaths" on an adult body. Rescue breaths are done in intervals around chest compressions to provide oxygen to the body, as the lungs might not be functioning when people have a cardiac arrest or stroke. [Source: Jaeun Yu]

Cleveland Clinic. However, the key understanding one should have is that CPR has a low chance of actually saving a person from a stroke/cardiac arrest all on its own. AEDs can be rare to find in certain situations, and calling 911 and requesting/providing help when met with someone confirmed to have a cardiac arrest is the key to saving a person's life. With this understanding, you can learn to be a valuable asset in saving lives amidst this epidemic of cardiovascular diseases.