

Student Reporter

Tesla Diner: Protest Meets Consumption



Chloe Je

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Protesters gather in front of the Tesla diner to demonstrate their ideas with chanting and signs. [Source: Author, Chloe Je]



Diners enjoying the free popcorn served by the Tesla Bot. [Source: Author, Chloe Je]

On the opening of the highly anticipated Tesla Diner, the intersection where it was located became not only a hotspot for a “once in a lifetime experience” but also the stage for protesters. It was a sharp juxtaposition for any passerby, with chanting crowds on one side and a seemingly infinite line of Teslas on the other. The physical distance between protesters and customers was rather short; people were standing only a few feet from where cars pulled in. The line of cars wrapped around the whole block, with some people

waiting for hours on end to enjoy their experience.

It was an odd contrast. Outside, the atmosphere was tense, with people shouting and honking their horns as they passed, and others marching around the block with large signs. However, inside was its own bubble with large movie screens and robots serving food and popcorn. To the guests there, it seemed as if the protest was happening miles away.

When speaking to certain protesters, the word “unfair” seemed

to be a common thread. It was “unfair” that their voices weren’t loud enough, and “unfair” that there was even a reason to be protesting. Several admitted that they might not have much of an immediate influence, but there was a shared sentiment that if they were able to convince one person to turn away, it was a job well done. One man stated, “Unity of the common folk is the strongest force of mankind,” and that it was “The human’s duty to exercise one’s civil rights.”

On the flip side, guests of the

Tesla Diner described the determined hour-long wait to get some food and a ticket inside as an exciting experience. One woman in particular noted that “No amount of protesters would stop [her] from having a life experience.” While most of the guests arrived in their Tesla vehicles, others stood in a separate line, still hoping to get inside the building.

Once inside, it was a completely different environment, with sleek, clean architecture and tables that accommodated a large number of people. On the second floor, people could enjoy the breeze, buy merchandise, and even interact with a Tesla Bot. There was merchandise ranging from apparel to action figures. Large screens played fan favorites, mostly drowning out the noise from the street below. A boy, age seven, excitedly showed me his Tesla Bot action figure.

The clash between patrons and protestors continued until the sun was low in the sky. It was one of opinions without actual contact, where seemingly neither side was really listening. By the end of the night, the protesters were still chanting, and the diners were still eating.

Student Reporter

Del Norte High’s First Game Opens 2025 Season



Kristine Park

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Del Norte High School

On August 22nd, Del Norte High School’s Nighthawks lit up the field for their first football game of the 2025 season. The stands were packed with fans, most of whom were decked out in green and blue to show school pride. From the kickoff, it was clear the players had a determined mindset. A strong offensive start in the first quarter set the tone, and the score ran neck to neck. Every block, pass, and run was cheered on by the crowd.

As I watched from the stands, I also noticed that it wasn’t just the action on the field that made the first football game memorable; it was the fun students had with their friends, families, and teachers. After a touchdown, the band would play the school tune while cheer and dance had an energetic dance segment, making the crowd roar with enthusiasm. Throughout the game, the press box played student favorites like Kendrick Lamar and popular songs to boost spirit. The Nighthawk ASB crew also played a part in keeping energy high through chants, smoke machines, and dances. My favorite part was singing along with my friends to songs. The excitement in the air as everyone screamed and jumped in the stands was tangible, and there was a pride everyone felt



The crowded student section at Del Norte’s first football game, where many are decked out in green and blue, showing their school spirit and energy. [Source: Del Norte High School ASB]

when the football team scored.

At halftime, Del Norte’s sideline performers took over. The cheer team launched into a routine that had them flying in the air in precise formations with

girls tumbling in front. The team performed high-flying stunts that were fascinating to watch. Next, the dance squad brought a routine full of precise formations and powerful moves while dancing

to a remix of “Bass Down Low.”. Finally, the marching band and color guard’s debut of their 2025 show “Ripple” came last of the three halftime shows. Their performance started with the sound effect of a water droplet, matching the water theme. Though they only performed the first movement of their show, the band marched with precision, as their instruments gleamed under the stadium lights. The color guard added vivid motion with dynamic flag work, which came together nicely at the big hits. The band finished their performance with a run-through of Del Norte’s fight song, and then all the halftime performances ended, resuming the football game.

Students were interviewed and asked about how they felt about the first football match of the year. Abigail Kang, a freshman, said, “I didn’t expect this game to be much fun, but it was super exciting singing to the songs and watching the halftime shows.” Returners like Katherine Chen also shared sentiments, saying that “Every football game is different, so it’s exciting to go to each one.” This goes to show Del Norte’s season opener was a big success. It will definitely remain a memorable experience for many and show Del Norte’s strong school spirit.

Student Reporter

Do People Study or Work Better with Music?



Harin Lee

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Students for years have argued over whether music assists or detracts from concentration when studying. Some individuals claim to require music to work, while others say that silence is optimal for concentration. To determine what works best for me, I experimented with three conditions: total silence, instrumental background music, and music with lyrics. I monitored both my level of concentration and how much work I accomplished in each scenario.

I initially assumed that silence would allow me to concentrate best. With no background noise, I figured I’d attend more closely to my work. But I found that complete silence made some sounds conspicuous: a footstep, for example, was even more distracting than if there had been small amounts of noise. Nevertheless, I accomplished a consistent level of work, so silence does provide a controlled, although sometimes strained, study environment.

Next, I attempted background music with no lyrics. This condition was the most comfortable. Instrumental music acted as a buffer, screening out small dis-

tractions without interrupting my thoughts. Neuroscience research backs this claim: instrumental music has been shown to boost dopamine release, enhancing mood and motivation. Since there are no lyrics present in the music, you are less likely to become distracted.

The last trial was with music that had lyrics. The lyrics mixed with my internal voice, and it became more difficult to write or read. The brain finds it difficult to multitask between processing language and doing schoolwork. Not unexpectedly, my concentration time was shorter, and I got less work done. Although music with lyrics can give an energy boost, it can conflict with activities that involve intense focus.

I also polled some peers on their preferences. One responded, “Silence makes me nervous. Music keeps my mind from drifting.” Another disagreed, “Lyrics are too distracting. If I really need to concentrate, I need silence.” A third liked instrumental music, saying it “Gives me energy without overwhelming me.” These responses illustrate that preferences may differ, but patterns still



Do lyrics, instrumentals, or silence make the best study partner? [Source: Author, Harin Lee]

emerge about what best supports focus.

Based on my experiment and interviews, the results suggest that each type of listening environment has its place. Lyric-heavy music may be better suited for situations where energy and inspiration matter more than precision, and instrumental background music for a steady focus on tasks.

On the other hand, silence, while not comfortable for everyone, works best when total concentration is required, especially for memorization or detail-oriented work. The most effective study method may depend on the task at hand, but knowing how different kinds of sound affect the brain can help people choose more wisely.

Student Reporter

The First Few Weeks Into Senior Year



Yerin Park
Grade 12
Seoul International School



The banner that was made for photos on the seniors of Seoul International School's last first day of high school. [Source: Author, Yerin Park]

Most first days of school start with the same feelings: a little bit of worry and a lot of excitement. Excitement of becoming one of the “upperclass,” seeing friends, getting to know new people, etc. Senior year is slightly different.

The ratio of worry grows a lot for most students, as they have to accept a lot of changes.

The first day of school itself almost advertised that my schoolmates and I were seniors, reminding me every second of

how close we are to the next chapter of our lives. Seeing all my friends after the summer full of prep work and essays, I felt a strong sense of connection that other “first days” didn’t bring me. Like most schools, seniors at Seoul International School get a few extra privileges, one of them being that we have a special lounge called the “seniors’ lounge,” which is an area only seniors can enter. All three years of my high school, it felt surreal to enter an area where I would always look at from afar, an area where the group of people I looked up to would take over.

All this excitement soon subsided, and the real jittering feelings kicked in with new college app forms that were rapidly being sent to all seniors. I saw the smiles on my friends’ faces fade a little bit with each notification, turning the loud senior lounge into a foreign, silent one. Over the first week, we had meetings that showed the outline of how our college app process should look, making sure all seniors are on track, and reminding us how far ED deadlines and results are, giving us an ambiguous feeling.

To describe my junior year, it felt quite literally like a “rehearsal,” before actually getting on stage. Throughout the year,

we watched the closest seniors to us go through this process for the third time in high school, and we paid close attention because we were next. All the deadlines, the stress, and the competition felt scary for me, because it was something that was coming our way, to the class of 2026. Now, rehearsal is finally over as my class steps into the position of being the role models, the big brothers and sisters of our high school.

“Although it has only been a few weeks in, it felt like months with all the things we have been assigned to do. With all these college apps, clubs, and school assignments, I rarely get a break. A lot of burden has been placed on my shoulders now that I am finally starting my last year in high school, and everything is moving past me so quickly,” said Jiah, a senior. “Although there is stress, I was able to find excitement in challenging myself in new classes that I haven’t considered much before, and also get more opportunities to look into the wide range of schools that I will possibly be spending the next four years of my life in.”

Although both exciting and scary, senior year is something that we will remember forever; our last year before moving out into the world.

Student Reporter

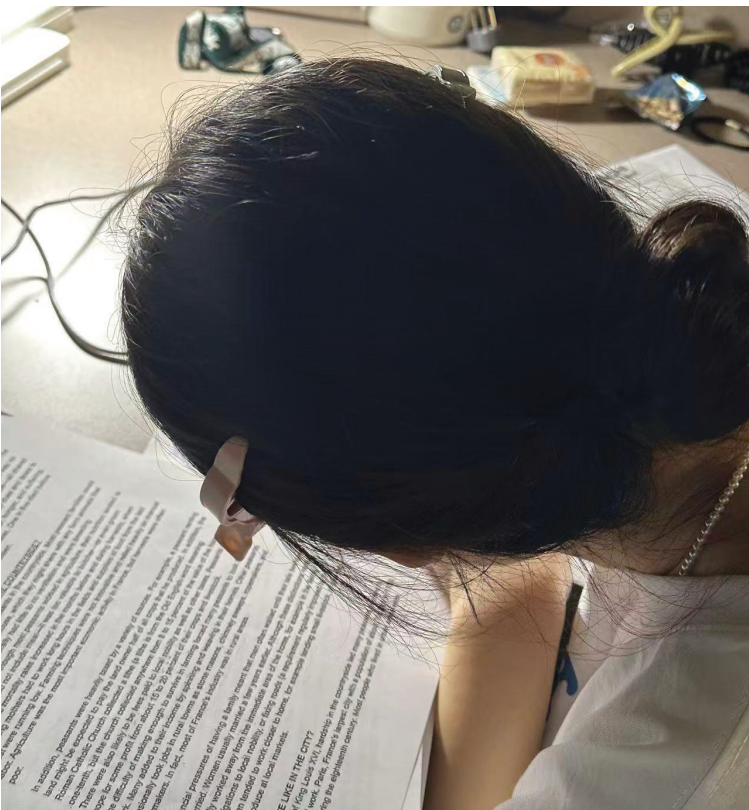
How I Log Into Growth



Linda Li
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Crean Lutheran High School

Imagine waking up in the morning after the sun rises on a normal school day, when you would normally be squeezing through the crowded hallways and trying not to earn a tardy slip. All you have to do is get up, open up your laptop, and go to Canvas. This scene has been my sole motivation to get through the overwhelming first week of school in my junior year. Every month, our school gives us the privilege to attend classes without being physically present at school, and this day is called Online Learning Day. It always occurs on a Friday, and so for us students, we gain a “free” long weekend. I remember how jealous my friends were when I told them about having an extra day off every month.

At the beginning of my sophomore year, which is the year that I joined the Crean Lutheran High School family, I regarded this day as extra free time to go on social media platforms or binge-watch Netflix shows. Little did I know, however, that in only two days, I would be suffering. I spent the weekend working arduously on all of my assignments, and it suffocated me: I was still finishing up the work I needed to turn in at half past midnight that Sunday. Over time, I realized the importance of productivity and being



Many students wait until the last minute to finish their online Learning Day assignments, but I have learned and make sure to finish them by Friday night, giving me a sense of accomplishment as well as more free time. [Source: Author, Linda Li]

self-disciplined. This week, I embraced the first Online Learning Day of my junior year. Immediately after the teachers posted the

assignments, I stood by my laptop and was ready to go. By planning out what I had to do, I was able to get my work done and even had

some downtime when I could hang out with my friends.

As technology becomes an indispensable part of our lives, it adds some spice to education as well. Specifically, some schools developed different programs to help students better adapt to society in the long run, which include Online Learning Day. This has taught me how to take responsibility for my own growth, and more importantly, to be mentally mature. Through this process, I acquired a variety of skills, including balancing life and leisure, planning beforehand, and setting small goals for myself, all of which will help me to succeed in the future.

Being raised in a family that valued knowledge, I was taught that technology is often a distraction. However, people often neglect the fact that it can also play an essential role in self-improvement and independence: overcoming temptations, such as bed rotting with Netflix, is as important as solving an algebra problem. Whenever I wake up in the morning and appreciate the bright blue sky that stretches seamlessly, I remind myself that logging in is not just about connecting to Canvas but enduring the quiet moments that ultimately lead to success.

Student Reporter

The Next Chapters in AI Evolution



Robin Ryul Kang
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Palos Verdes Peninsula High School

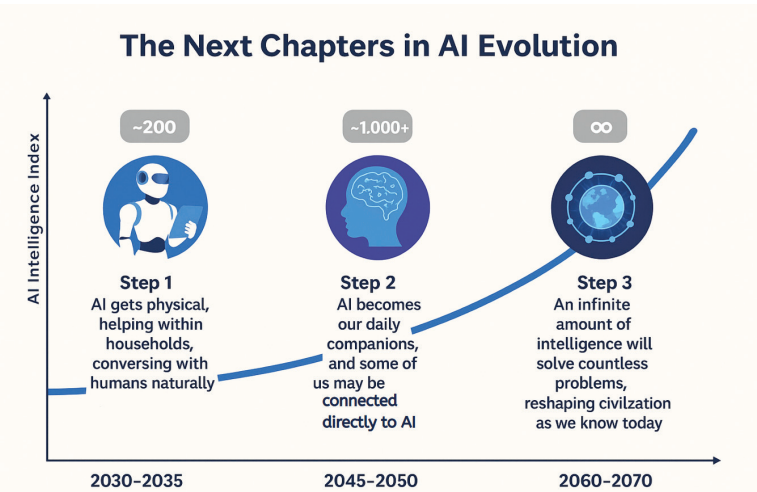
What actually changed with the release of ChatGPT-5 that’s different from GPT-4? One crucial change, as the majority of users have noticed, is that ChatGPT now occasionally takes its time to respond to complex problems, thereby reducing its error margin by an impressive 45-80%. Sam Altman, the CEO of OpenAI, described the new version of ChatGPT as “Having a team of PhD-level experts in your pocket.” Interestingly, this resembles what Steve Jobs said during the introduction of the iPhone 1: it’s an iPod, internet communicator, and phone all in your small pocket, except now, in 2025, it’s a team of experts in all fields of study.

With how fast artificial intelligence is evolving, it’s plausible to assume that it has reached its maximum growth rate. Surprisingly, not the case. There are three major steps that the AI evolution will most likely take in our near future. All three steps are likely to be taken within 35-45 years, and the last one truly messes up people’s minds. First of all, in 5-10 years, it is expected that AI

will manifest itself in its physical form and may start roaming the streets in some areas. It will be able to serve as a simple housekeeper, able to do laundry and perform simple cooking skills. We will communicate with it as if we were talking to a human, cracking jokes and laughing together.

Another 10-15 years after AI becomes physical and begins to join our everyday lives, it is expected to have become a friend, co-worker, or even a lover, though unlikely. By this period, which is about 2045-2050, integration of digital chips into human brains may allow some of us to connect directly to AI, aiding in knowledge and reasoning. AI will begin to grasp human tone, emotion, and nuance.

Lastly, in about 35 years from today, AI will have reached the singularity of intelligence. In physics, the term singularity refers to a point where functions take a value of infinity, like the centers of a black hole. What does this mean for artificial intelligence? Here’s the terrifying part—it will be able to advance itself, boundlessly. Thus, their intelligence will begin



The next possible steps of AI evolution could happen in the next 35-45 years. When most teenagers nowadays would be entering their elderly stage of life. [Source: Author, Robin Ryul Kang]

to grow exponentially and surpass that of human intelligence within a fraction of time. This could mean an infinite number of things: eradication of disease, climate change, aging, and more. It’s fun to imagine what kind of future humanity could have.

Obviously, there are limits to how intelligent something can be, but so are the variables to the

problems humanity contemporarily faces. These could be solved within the next 40 years, and artificial intelligence is most likely the solution. We are witnessing a creation that could change humanity more than anything that ever has. But this doesn’t necessarily mean a beneficial change. Artificial intelligence may be the last thing humanity ever invents.