

Editors' Column

A Prom Experience to Capture



Reanna Lee
Grade 11
North Hollywood
High School

North Hollywood High School hosted its 2026 prom on April 25 at the Los Angeles Equestrian Center. Themed "A Night in Bayou" after the aesthetic and setting of "The Princess and the Frog," the school's seniors, juniors, and faculty gathered for a truly memorable event. Everything was wonderfully prepared by the Student Council, who had been working toward this night for the past four months. The Junior Council chaperoned the event while their senior members enjoyed partying.

Vines of ivy lined the interior, and walls of lush plants and soft fairy lights adorned the yard. Guests sat down, talking with friends, sipping lemonade from the bar, and spent the night taking pictures and enjoying the festive atmosphere. Friends hugged and complimented each other and even met mutuals from other schools who had been invited to join. Sparkling dresses and flashy tuxedos were a blur of color in the brightly lit ballroom. Light jazz played as people walked into the venue, later transitioning into classic party hits as the night wore on.

No matter how exciting, prom, of course, can't be prom without



The prom king and queen enjoying their first dance on the dance floor at the Los Angeles Equestrian Center. [Source: Author, Reanna Lee]



A group of friends posing for a picture at one of the many photobooths stationed at prom. [Source: Author, Reanna Lee]

pictures. Photobooths were scattered around the venue with long lines of friends and dates eager to pose themselves against the flashy background of "A Night in

Bayou." They made for tokens of one of the last moments of high school life that people could hold on to, whether digital or print. If people did not get a chance to vis-

it the booths, however, they were still captured on camera by the student photographers weaving around the venue. I was one of those photographers, and it was an experience I had the absolute pleasure of experiencing. I, alongside three others, spent my night wandering the venue to snap pictures of guests enjoying food, dancing, chatting with friends, and posing.

Prom is a time for seniors to relax after college applications and spend time with friends and classmates.

Additionally, it is a celebration of their high school journey — something I realized as I looked at all the dressed-up guests on the dance floor. Seeing some of my senior friends reminded me that only a few weeks are left before graduation. I felt the duty as a photographer to capture their memories well.

Not only did this opportunity give me the chance to work behind-the-scenes of our school's social media, but it also gave me a glimpse of what my class's prom will look like next year. I definitely found myself wondering who would be taking my pictures...

Student Reporter

VEX Worlds: Inside a Champion's Experience



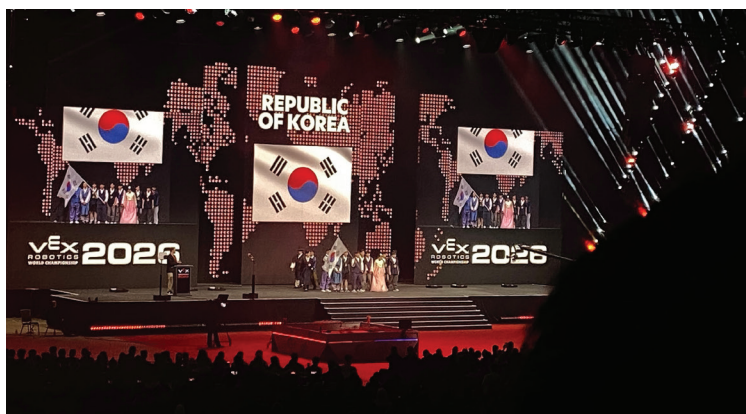
Elizabeth Kim
Grade 9
Beckman High School

During the week of April 21st-24th, the VEX Robotics High School Worlds Championships were hosted in the city of St. Louis, in Missouri. Over 800 teams from all over the world met to compete, connect, and above all, learn from one another.

VEX Robotics is a robotics competition where teams design, build, document, program, and drive robots to compete in head-to-head games between two alliances. Various tournaments are held throughout the season, such as States or National Championships, but the VEX World Championships is the culminating event where the highest performance of the game is played, and where teams' hard work is truly shown.

This year was my first time going to Worlds as a high school competitor, and it was a truly amazing and inspiring experience seeing all of the different teams there.

One of the most inspiring parts of the event was the parade of nations. The event started off



Various countries from all over the world participated in the parade of nations. It was inspiring to see the power of robotics to connect us all. [Source: Author, Elizabeth Kim]

with the opening ceremonies, showcasing teams from different countries with people holding flags and some even wearing traditional clothing. Seeing teams globally all connect together in pursuit of the common goal of learning and competing was uplifting. It was a great start to the event, allowing me to truly understand the scale of the competition and the bigger impact robotics and STEM had on everyone.

From there, it was lots of

fun talking to teams from other states or countries and bonding with them. Whether our team was against or allied with them for a match, it was a great learning opportunity to see new perspectives in robotics. Even outside of the competition, walking through the venue and collecting various team merch from teams all over the world was incredibly fun as well. I was grateful for all the memories I made with people I would never have been able to meet otherwise.

The team's hard work throughout the season was exemplified as they kept winning and moving along in the competition rounds. On the last day of the event, finals were played in the huge dome arena, and everyone was able to see who was truly the best in the world. The last few matches of the season were incredibly exciting and hard-fought as team 10B and 1028A won the entire competition. Jacob, from the 2026 World Champion team 10B, said, "Winning worlds doesn't come easy, consistency is something that is very important, especially in our team's robotics journey. This means putting in work every single day, testing, improving, and making sure that every single part of our robot is perfect. Going into worlds, you need to know that your robot can outperform every single other robot on the field, and you have to fight until the last second for every match."

My first HS Worlds was an incredible experience, with meeting amazing teams and learning from the world champions themselves. See you next season!

Student Reporter

Volunteering at Local Farms: The Perfect Experience



Chloe Je
Grade 10
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Local farms and volunteering are vital for building healthy communities and supporting sustainability. Since most of today's food comes from industrial giants, reconnecting with local food systems through community service offers practical benefits. Local farms are essential because they provide fresh, seasonal produce that is usually more nutritious than food shipped across the country for days. Fruits and vegetables grown nearby are harvested when they're actually ripe, which makes them taste better. By supporting local farms, people get better food and help the environment by cutting down on all the extra transportation, packaging, and storage.

Beyond just nutrition, local farms help the local economies. When people buy directly from farmers' markets or community-supported agriculture programs, more money stays within the community. This helps small farmers keep their businesses going, create jobs, and maintain the agricultural diversity. Without this support, many small farms can't really compete with large industrial operations, which can



A large community farm overlooks a field of freshly turned-over soil: a place where many come to volunteer their time and help make the world a little better of a place. [Source: Author, Chloe Je]

lead to the loss of farmland and rural jobs.

Volunteering on these local farms makes those benefits even stronger and helps people care about where their food comes from. As members of our society

become busier, people of all ages tend to feel more isolated. When you volunteer, you get to connect with your community while seeing firsthand how food is grown, harvested, and distributed. This experience makes you a more mindful shopper and helps you

appreciate the hard work that goes into farming. It also bridges gaps between people by encouraging everyone to work together as a team.

Additionally, volunteering is great for your social well-being. Working alongside others toward shared goals builds relationships and a sense of belonging that can be hard to find sometimes. Volunteering is a great way for people who feel discouraged to meet new people and engage with others. Whether you're harvesting crops or handing out food, you're contributing to something bigger than yourself.

Finally, local farms are important for the environment, and volunteers help advance those efforts. Small farms are more likely to use sustainable practices like crop rotation, composting, and using fewer chemicals. These methods protect soil health, conserve water, and support biodiversity. When volunteers help out with these tasks, they don't just assist the farmers—they also learn eco-friendly habits that they can start using in their own lives.

Editors' Column

Young Angels Choir Performs for Children's Hospital



Summer Park
Grade 11
Harvard-Westlake School

Even with rain across Los Angeles, the seats were packed at Shriners Children's Southern California for the 8th Annual GCEO Choir Benefit Concert on April 25th. The evening brought together the Young Angels Choir and local supporters of Shriners Children's for a night of music and festivity aimed at raising funds for children receiving care at the hospital.

The concert kicked off with a message from the president of Hankuk University of Foreign Studies, who thanked attendees and performers for showing up, despite the weather, to support such a critical cause. Sam Kim, a resident running for a congressional seat who is a former police officer and pastor, reminded us all of the importance of community and civic engagement. The opening messages of gratitude for coming out for the live performance and the mission beyond ourselves set the tone of giving and joy for the night.

The program featured 18 songs ranging from different genres, languages, and cultures. The program was impressively varied, moving from the traditional African American spiritual, "Ride the Chariot," to upbeat Korean pop songs that energized the crowd.



The Young Angels Choir performed as guest artists in the 8th Annual Benefit Concert. [Source: Author, Summer Park]

The variety of music felt like a solid reflection of the diverse styles you might see across Los Angeles.

A major highlight of the evening was the Young Angels Choir itself, led by conductor Won Hyeon Choi and assistant conductor Jungrok Oh. The choir took on three pieces: "Going Home" by Paul Langford, "Memories" by Andy Beck, and "When You Wish Upon a Star" by Leigh Harline.

Their performance of "Memories," with its lively choreography, was easily the crowd favorite. The choir didn't just stand and sing; they brought in choreography and invited the audience to clap along. That interaction turned the set into a shared celebration, breaking the formal "recital" vibe and getting everyone in the room involved.

Maxim Kuzin, who currently

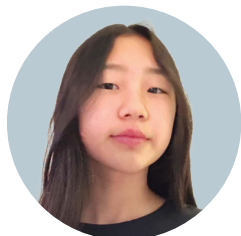
serves as the music director of the Palisades Symphony and Chorale and the Thousand Oaks Philharmonic, stepped in to lead the Stage I and Stage V performances. His direction added a professional polish to the ensemble, rounding out a night that proved how much of an impact a community can make when they rally behind a good cause.

Conductor Wi Young Oh took the baton for the finale, leading a high-energy performance of "Dancing Queen." It was the perfect way to wrap up the night, with the audience up on their feet and dancing along with the performers. The energy on stage made for a great final moment that left everyone on a high note.

Beyond the music, the concert showed what happens when students use their talent for a bigger cause, joined by elders who continue singing. By bringing together song, dance, and fundraising, the event was one of community, bringing people of all ages, backgrounds, and purposes together. The goal is for the ticket sales to provide additional support for the families at Shriners Children's. It was a good reminder that a few hours of music can go a long way in making a local impact.

Student Reporter

A Closer Look at the Colburn Chamber Intensive



Paisley Park
Grade 10
South Pasadena High School

Classic music programs often emphasize large ensemble playing, but chamber music programs redefine what it means to collaborate as a musician. After ten years as a violinist, I became increasingly drawn to chamber music, which led me to participate in Colburn's Summer Chamber Intensive program. Compared to orchestral playing, chamber music is more intimate and collaborative, requiring active listening and a strong understanding of the music. While orchestras contain tens of musicians that sometimes can drown out an individual's personal voice, chamber music highlights that and gives each musician a more distinct role.

Entering the program, I anticipated an extremely fast-paced and rigorous environment since members were only given about a week to rehearse and perform. However, it was manageable because the schedule included frequent group rehearsal sessions. The program spanned from Tuesday through Sunday, with daily sessions ranging from five to six hours. Despite the tight schedule, the intensive included fun events like watching master classes, yoga sessions, and solo recitals.



During the final performance at the Colburn Summer Chamber Intensive Program, my group played like we would have never imagined when we first started rehearsals earlier that week. [Source: Author, Paisley Park]

These events provided a break from the intensity of rehearsals while still inspiring musical growth and community among the participants. The program followed a structure around morning rehearsals and coaching sessions, followed by performances of each of the groups and activities.

I joined a chamber group containing two violins, a viola, and a cello, in which we played Mendelssohn's String Quartet No. 3 in

D major. Although we prepared our parts of the piece in advance, early rehearsals revealed that technical accuracy alone was not enough—we needed to align our overall musical approach. Coordinating aspects of the piece simultaneously was challenging, but by utilizing the free time we had within the program, we were able to rehearse and work through each passage until we achieved a unified interpretation.

The program gave us the

opportunity to work with experienced coaches, each of whom brought a distinct perspective, offering technical corrections as well as interpretive guidance. Many of our instructors emphasized listening as an active skill essential for cohesion. Through coaching, we learned that chamber music relies as much on awareness and adaptability as it does on execution. One of the most significant challenges was adapting in real time, as chamber music demands flexibility in every aspect, with constant change in tone and tempo. This requires a shift in focus - from individual sound to the group's overall outcome.

The Chamber Intensive Program also hosted informal performances among participants, in which groups could play in a lower-pressure environment. These experiences made the final performance feel less overwhelming. This intensive deepened my appreciation for chamber music and challenged me to become a more attentive and responsive musician. I became more aware of how my playing affected the ensemble as a whole, which changed the way I approached both rehearsals and performance.

Student Reporter

Seafood Town: More than Just a Restaurant



Evalyn Yu
Grade 10
Palos Verdes High School

Seafood Town Chinese Restaurant's location is not doing it any favors. Tucked away in an unassuming lot along Hawthorne Boulevard, the Cantonese-style comfort restaurant is often overshadowed by roaring traffic and the countless taquerias, burger joints, and Korean barbecue restaurants just across the street. Yet somehow, without ever being formally chosen, Seafood Town was elected the unofficial backdrop to every major moment of my childhood, from my sixth birthday party to the first post-pandemic meal I shared with my grandparents. Now, as a teenager, I feel an unspoken pull each time I drive past the restaurant — an urge to navigate into its tiny, chaotic parking lot once more and return to an ode to the past.

To be honest, Seafood Town's interior is not glamorous. The room is filled with a dim, flickering light that feels like a hazy fever dream. The old-fashioned telephone never stops ringing with takeout orders. The restaurant walls are pink — a fact that delighted me when I was a child — but now I see that the



Seafood Town's generous portions and low prices keep diners coming back for more and creating new memories. [Source: Author, Evalyn Yu]

paint is peeling and likely hasn't been freshened since I first came here 10 years ago. However, the restaurant's customers aren't interior design snobs. They're here for quick service, comfort food, and the complimentary tapioca pudding that comes at the end of each meal.

Seafood Town's famous lunch special is a steal: a choice of soup, protein, rice, and dessert for just \$12.50. Each meal comes with steaming jasmine tea, which is perfectly fragrant and aids with digestion.

Suan la tang, or hot and sour soup, is a classic starter loaded

with unique textures from crisp bamboo shoots to rubbery wood ear mushrooms. My entree of choice is the fish fillet with black bean sauce — a sensory delight of crispy skin, soft and flaky meat, and an umami-rich sauce made from fermented soybeans. When combined with a bite of fresh rice, the combination of crunchy, tender, and sticky textures is truly life-changing.

Another classic is the shrimp fried rice, which has just the right balance of MSG, snappy crustaceans, and crispy rice from the wok. Next, try their kung pao chicken. Although it comes with a suspiciously high ratio of green

onions to chicken chunks, the dish's flavor makes up for it. It's doused in a sweet, dark sauce and adorned with red peppers for a spicy kick.

Finish your meal with complimentary fortune cookies and tapioca pudding, a milky and textural delight. Expect to come home with armfuls of bursting takeout boxes. Seafood Town's portions are beyond generous for their \$10-\$20 prices.

To me, Seafood Town represents comfort. It's leaving with a warm, stuffed belly and a ridiculous amount of leftovers, which always taste better eaten cold the next day. In reality, it's not just the food that makes the experience. It's the nostalgia that keeps me coming back—the universal experience of burning my mouth on piping hot jasmine tea, ordering family-style and catching up with loved ones over some classic Chinese food. My favorite restaurants aren't necessarily the most glamorous experiences, but rather the ones that fill me with appreciation, regardless of the location.