



**Gender reveals
are everywhere,
and we have
thoughts**
see page 7



**You scream,
I scream, we
all scream for
BOBA!**
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Terra Nova Times

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Breaking Down the Walls

By Ilan Oren
Times staff writer

Breaking Down the Walls returned to Terra Nova on Sept. 9 and 10. Students might remember this event from last spring, but many who didn’t attend this or last year’s assembly might be wondering: What is Breaking Down the Walls?

Terra Nova principal Ms. Carey described Breaking Down the Walls as an interactive session “where an outside facilitator comes in and does an assembly workshop with students.” A select group of students is trained by these facilitators “to lead activities with their classmates, peers, and other students.” Carey explained how the overall goal of Breaking Down the Walls is to focus on “building relationships with other students” and encourage students to break away from confinement to their “little cliques and social groups...”

Last year’s Breaking Down the Walls was a smashing success among students and staff. Ms. Carey held several meetings with students last year to see their feedback on the workshop, and “[er] original plan was that it was going to be every other year...but the students said, ‘No, let’s bring it back this year, do it at the start of this year,



Ilan Oren / Terra Nova Times

Terra Nova students had group discussions during the event.

and then go every other year.’ So I take that endorsement as a sign of success.”

Kevin Le (12) had a great time last year at Breaking Down the Walls. After being nominated to be a leader, at first he was hesitant. Still, when he decided to attend, he described it as “a very fun experience getting to know people, and even a bunch of familiar faces

that you’ll always see around school, but you never really talk to. Breaking Down the Walls gives you a good chance to make a lot of new friends, and I thought it made a really good memory.”

School connectedness, which is the primary goal of Breaking Down the

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10 candidates run for PSD board

By Jack Swiedler
Times staff writer

The Pacifica School Board Elections will take place on Nov. 3. This will be the first election for the school district in ten years due to school board members having either run unopposed or been appointed to vacant seats.

Of the five total seats on the school board, there are three seats open for four-year terms and one seat open for a two-year term to fill a seat left open by the resignation of Lynda Brocchini. The fifth seat, held by Kai Doggett, won’t be up for election until 2028.

Ten candidates total are running, including three incumbents — Elizabeth Bredall, Laverne Villalobos, and Bridget Hardt. Bredall and Villalobos have been on the board since 2014, while Hardt was appointed to the board in Feb. 2025.

The candidates running for the four-year seats are Katy Bradley, Tiffany Button, Rachel Durkin, Bridget Hardt, Grace Sobieski, Christopher Swiedler, and Laverne Villalobos. For the two-year seat, it’s Elizabeth Bredall, Kelly Mendoza, and Tracey Simmons.

One unusual aspect of the election is that four of the candidates are running as a slate on the same platform. The “Let’s Get to Work” slate consists of Button, Mendoza, Sobieski, and Swiedler. Bradley, Durkin, and Simmons are each running as individuals.

When asked why they chose to run as a slate, Swiedler made the reason clear, stating, “By putting ourselves forward as a slate, anyone who wants to vote for change has a clear and easy option. Also, by endorsing each other like this, we can communicate to voters that if they know and trust one of us, they can trust all of us.”

A majority of the candidates cited the district’s financial crisis and a perceived lack of transparency as reasons for deciding to run. The district’s financial issues are so dire that in Jan. 2025, the board voted to close the middle school portion at both Vallemar Elementary and Ocean Shore Elementary and to relocate Ocean

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Mutti goes to 49er training camp

By Max Herr
Times staff writer

Terra Nova High School sophomore Miranda Mutti was recently selected as one of approximately ten Bay Area students to attend the John Lynch Foundation’s Star Student-Athlete program, a one-day event hosted by the San Francisco 49ers recognizing academic and athletic achievement.

She was nominated for the program by a coach or school staff member and was notified of the selection by email roughly a month later. The John Lynch Foundation, established by 49ers General Manager John Lynch, identifies student-athletes from all across the Bay Area based on a combination of academic performance, and athletic involvement/achievements, then invites a small group to a recognition event at the team’s facility.

Mutti’s academic record includes multiple Advanced Placement/enriched courses and an upcoming college-level course. Athletically, she competes for Terra Nova for volleyball while also playing at the club level outside of the



Alyssa Jenkins / Terra Nova Times

Mutti (right) is a fierce competitor who has fun while fighting to win.

school season. Balancing that workload, she said, has gotten noticeably harder since freshman year, as classes, athletics, and volunteer commitments have all ramped up all at once.

The program itself was a single day. Participants were welcomed into a conference room, where each received a gift

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Band performs “Rain or Shine”

By Adelaide Twomey
Times staff writer

This year Terra Nova Marching Band’s field show theme is “Rain or Shine,” arranged by Ben Hylton. This show combines musical elements and movements. Band Director Mr. Bishop-Peters said, “The idea of [the show is] learning to roll with the punches and...have a positive mental attitude, even if it is raining.”

The show opens with the front ensemble playing quietly while the sound effect of rain pours in. An umbrella stands on the field, and the marching band looks up at the sky as the sound of rain fills the air. Drum Major Daniel Salas (12) said, “Watching everybody work as a team and learn the choreo and the music



Zoe Lim / Terra Nova Times

TN Marching Band showcases their 2026 show — “Rain or Shine” — for the first time.

is amazing.” The piece evolves from quiet rain to a thunderstorm, finally ending more upbeat as the sun comes out.

Band members spoke about what the theme “Rain or Shine” means to them. River Borup (11) said, “The theme to me rep-

resents growing to accept [the rain]...Our band literally does that – we end up playing at football games that are pouring and

our instruments get super wet, but we still play and have fun.”

Salas added, “The music is so awesome, especially when we have so many trumpet players because they’re so loud and strong.”

As the band enters their competition season in the upcoming weeks, they are focused on taking this optimistic mindset and applying it to future performances. The theme means more than just a show; the band has embraced taking on a positive perspective while growing together. Mr. Bishop-Peters commented, “The theme “Rain or Shine” means to me how life is: you can’t control the weather, you can’t control the experiences that you have in life, but you can control what you make of those experiences.”

New stop sign on Fassler added for safety

By Ezra Dubnicoff
Times staff writer

Earlier this month, the intersection between Fassler Avenue and Crespi Drive was converted from a T-intersection with one stop sign at Crespi Drive to an all-way stop, adding two new stop signs.

According to Vice Mayor and District 4 city councilmember Greg Wright, the decision to add stop signs was primarily a public safety decision. Wright said, “The sheer number of accidents is what drove the need for the city to put that [the stop signs] in.” Wright explained that after a combination of concerns and observations voiced by himself and others, the city looked into finding a solution.

Since the change, Wright has observed an “initial shock to the system,” as people’s routines are centered around the old intersection. However, Wright noted that these signs are especially important because the intersection is a route to school, where safety is even more of a priority. There was a two and a quarter mile stretch from the bottom of Fassler Avenue and Highway 1 to the intersection between Lerida



Ezra Dubnicoff / Terra Nova Times

Fassler’s new stop aims to protect drivers and students.

Way and Terra Nova Boulevard without a single stoppage in traffic.

Wright also said that with inexpe-

rienced high school drivers, the previous organization of the intersection was “setting them up for failure.”

Some students appreciate the change. Peyton Morganti (11), who turns left on Fassler to Crespi on her commute home, said, “Before the stop signs were there, I could never turn left because everyone coming up would just be flying. So, I think it’s very nice because now I can actually turn left.”

Other students are less pleased with the change, however. Janderr Catap (11) said, “[There’s] so much more traffic when I’m getting to school and getting out of school. It makes my drive on the way home so much longer.”

Megan Benavides Casierra (10) has a nuanced viewpoint on the stop signs as a pedestrian. “My opinion is that it was necessary,” Casierra said, “but it would have been better if they put it in on Terra Nova [Boulevard]. I’m the first house next to Terra Nova... so every time I cross the street to walk to school, I nearly get [run] over.”

Ultimately, the decision to turn the Crespi Drive and Fassler Avenue intersection into an all-way stop was motivated by the desire to make the Fassler and Crespi intersection safer for everyone. Greg Wright said, “If I can save one kid, I’m happy.”

Plans underway for new murals on campus this school year

By Ezra Dubnicoff
Times staff writer

For the 2026-27 school year, Terra Nova plans to have students paint new murals around campus in coordination with a professional muralist and TN’s art teacher, Ms. Scarbrough.

The contract, approved in a board meeting in August, states the services of the muralist will be “to guide and supervise Terra Nova students through the process of painting outdoor murals on campus.” Although the project is still being discussed, the mural will most likely be

found outside the band room.

Ms. Scarbrough will be leading students to come up with designs. Scarborough said, “We are in the process of organizing a project to...incorporate students in making a mural with support from local artists.” There are also plans to come up with a collaborative design that combines work from everybody involved. Scarbrough added the project is expected to be done sometime this school year.

The muralist is Jeffrey Wong, a Terra Nova parent who has worked on the Boys and Girls Club building in Pacifica. Wong will be taking on the role of a

supervisor; he said, “I’m there to give them pointers (and) guidance because I have painted murals for over fifteen years.”

Wong will also be responsible for prepping the surfaces and applying a primer layer to the walls, which is a thorough task. Wong explained, “The walls get prepped by...patching up all the holes, taking down all the fixtures that were on there to clear up the wall, and (getting a) power wash.” Wong explained further that the first coat will be a tinted primer to add more depth to the finished murals. “Usually, the public works or maintenance can use an anti-

mold or anti-mildew deterrent or detergent to wash the wall so it gives it a fresh surface before we start painting,” he added.

The students involved will use a type of paint normally made for painting houses, so a protective coat will not be needed. Wong said that this type of paint “will withstand the elements and...the exterior paint is UV resistant, and also stretches and expands and contracts to the temperature of the environment, so it can get hot and stretch a little bit and then if it’s cold, it’ll contract.”

Terra Nova hasn’t gotten a new mural since the Class of

2015 commissioned the five vertical panels hanging on the exterior wall of the cafeteria closest to the band room. “We had a lot of money left over and wanted to leave a gift to the school that would last for years. Three of the panels were painted by Class of 2015 graduates, while the other two were painted by a professional. The hope was always that the student panels would feature recent student artwork, but with changing art teachers and a pandemic, it just hasn’t happened. I am thrilled to see new murals heading our way soon,” said Class of 2015 advisor Mrs. Jenkins.

News

Ban at Linda Mar chases off RVs

By Katho Renfroe
Times staff writer

From 10:00 p.m. to 5:00 a.m. parking is now banned at Linda Mar Beach with a \$46 ticket for violators.

Over the summer, long-term RV and vehicle encampments grew in the north and south parking lots of Linda Mar Beach. Many residents and surfers reported trash, raw sewage dumping, safety concerns, as well as a significant decrease in parking spots.

Ashley Robins (12) said, “I’ve definitely noticed a lot more trash around the beach these past few months. The trash from the parking lots is blowing onto the beach and into the ocean, which is really concerning.”

Although this initial ban is only for 90 days starting July 29, the city is taking steps to make this a permanent rule.

Pacifica’s has a particularly large homeless community. According to Coastside



Katho Renfroe / Terra Nova Times

RVs line Esplanade Ave. in northern Pacifica after overnight parking banned at the beach.

News, Pacifica has the largest population of homeless in San Mateo County, standing at 228 unhoused residents. This is a 41% increase from 2024. According to the San

Mateo Daily Journal, 42% of unsheltered people live in makeshift vehicle setups and 27% live in RVs. Many of these people in RVs park in communal places like Linda Mar

Beach to avoid paying for designated RV lots or trailer parks. Pacifica does not currently operate a local homeless shelter. Although residents want to help the homeless population, they

believe allowing them to take up spots and pollute Linda Mar Beach is not the way to do it. Brian Feulner started a petition on June 29, 2026, via Change.org called, “Clean up Linda Mar beach: End vehicle squatting now!” garnering over 1,000 signatures. This petition demanded fair access to the beach parking lot and an actual solution to Pacifica’s growing homeless community. The petition states, “Compassion means providing genuine support and proper shelter, not ignoring a growing biohazard and restricting public access at our local beach.”

There is an issue that still stands: where will all these RV’s go for now? Molly Parham (11) said, “Well, it’s just the Linda Mar Beach that has the ban, so they could park maybe at Rockaway or by IBL.” Some have already popped up in the SamTrans Park-and-Ride lot on Linda Mar Blvd, while a number line Oceana Blvd. near Eureka Square and Esplanade Blvd. near Manor Drive.

Inaugural Daisy Chain Fields festival delights

By Kasey Seipel
Times staff writer

On Aug. 29, the Daisy Chain Fields music festival, created by singer Olivia Rodrigo to support nonprofits championing women and girls rights, occurred in Irvine, California with an audience of 45,000. The festival raised \$20 million and had an all-women lineup, with artists playing for free to support women’s rights.

When creating Daisy Chain Fields, Rodrigo was heavily inspired by the Lilith Fair, an all-women touring festival from the late 90s created by singer Sarah McLachlan, which raised \$10 million for charity. Lilith Fair was created as a response to the music industry’s insistence that two women could not headline a show nor be played back-to-back on the radio.

Daisy Chain, a name representing how multiple parts can come together and create something strong, partnered with ten non-profit organizations supporting women and girls. These include



Courtesy of Camila Dahlberg.

45,000 attendees showed up for the festival, pioneered by Olivia Rodrigo.

Planned Parenthood, National Women’s Law Center, and Black Mamas Matter Alliance. 100% of the festival’s net

profits went to these organizations. The festival raised \$10 million, and philanthropist Melinda French Gates do-

nated another \$10 million to the cause.

The intergenerational lineup included Chappell Roan, DoeChii, and Bikini Kill, a female punk band who pioneered the Riot Grrl punk feminist movement in the 90s. This movement inspired many aspects of the festival, with an exhibition about it being on site. Olivia Rodrigo’s set featured duets with legendary artists Sarah McLachlan, Alanis Morissette, and Stevie Nicks. Camila Dahlberg (11), who attended the festival, said, “I really liked watching Olivia Rodrigo and Stevie Nicks...that was my favorite part of the entire thing.”

A large part of the festival was the philanthropy village, called Daisy Chain Reaction, where attendees could learn more about participating organizations and find ways to take action while collecting merchandise. Though the weather was very hot, the energy stayed positive. Artists reminded people to stay hydrated along with the festival providing free

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California debuts its DROP system to force data brokers to delete you

By Grover Hawkins
Times staff writer

As of Aug. 1, 2026, California residents are able to request a deletion of all personal data from verified data brokers who would otherwise sell your information without you even knowing. California is the only state that gives residents a free and easy option to protect their online data.

California has always been a pioneer in internet safety, beginning with the California Consumer Privacy Act (CCPA)

in 2018 that gave residents more information on data collected and the right to delete that data.

With internet security becoming of even greater importance as people’s online presence increases, the Delete Act was passed in 2023, leading to the launch of DROP in 2026.

DROP officially began sending deletion requests to verified data brokers, listed on California’s data broker registry, on Aug. 1, 2026. They are now required by California law to review Californian’s claims and delete any data that matches

a DROP user’s information.

Once a deletion request has been processed and information is deleted, the data broker is required to re-delete any matching data collected every 45 days.

DROP is free and easy to use. According to Calprivacy executive director Tom Kemp, Californians can clear their data with a “single click” compared to over ten full work days to manually request deletion.

Deleting your information from data brokers protects it from being sold and used against you — data brokers mainly sell

to government agencies, scammers, identity thieves, and, recently, generative AI companies.

Although some believe their online information is not something to be worried about, companies are constantly taking information and finding ways to profit off of it. Sites like Spokeo.com and Fastpeoplesearch.com show how available your information is without a cost — with a simple search, you can find the home, phone number, family members, and criminal record of anyone over the age of 18. Furthermore, for

a small fee, a company can find extremely sensitive data such as social security numbers and data on minors. Especially with the rise of artificial intelligence, even if you believe you can stay safe from targeted attacks, the family around you may be more easily tricked by misleading images or calls using your likeness. Student Nova Duncavage (11) believes in her ability to protect herself online but “[doesn’t] trust [her] grandparents to protect themselves as they don’t understand how common it is to have their information stolen.”

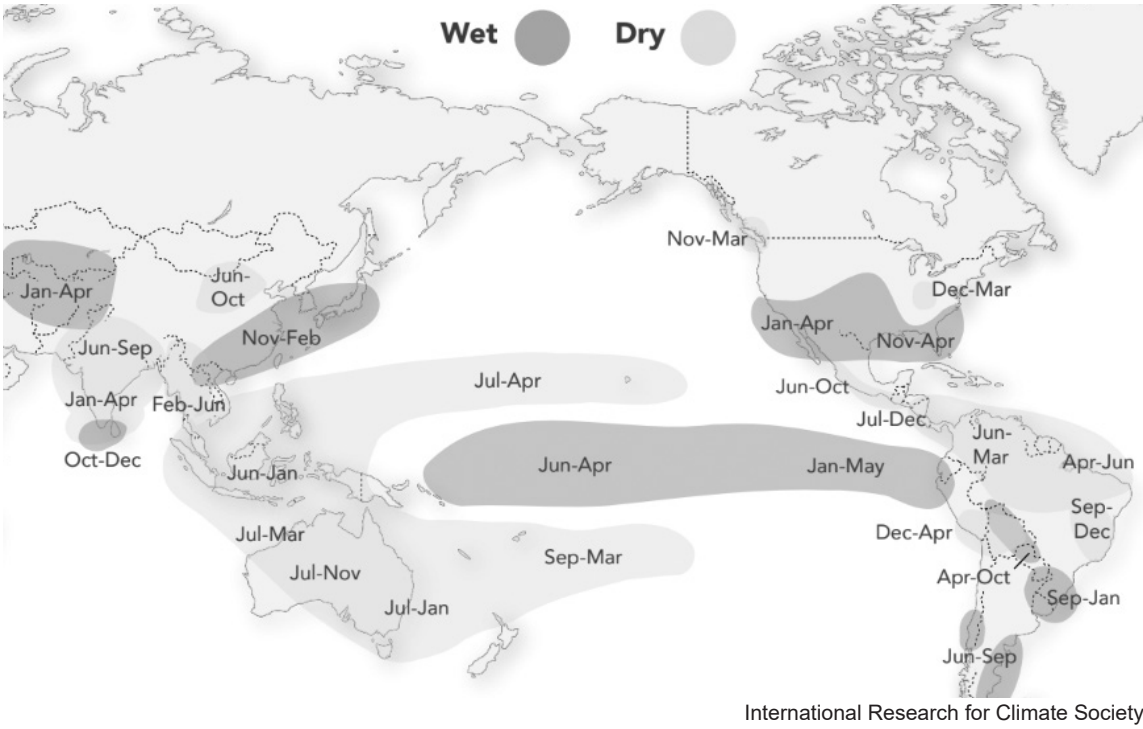
California braces itself for El Niño

By Kasey Seipel
Times staff writer

Last Monday, Gov. Gavin Newsom declared a state of emergency for California, as the United States prepares for the peak of what will likely be the strongest El Niño on record. Although El Niño is a natural phenomenon, warming temperatures due to climate change increase its frequency and severity.

El Niño is the movement of warm waters from the eastern Pacific Ocean to the western Pacific. This is due to weakened trade winds, which blow east to west near the equator. This movement of lots of warm water can affect atmospheric circulation across the globe, which is called a teleconnection pattern. The more severe the El Niño, the greater the likelihood of extreme weather.

Generally, El Niño leads to wetter and colder conditions in the Southern U.S. but drier and warmer conditions in the North. However, scientists find there is a boundary around central Cali-



This winter’s El Niño is expected to significantly affect the entire globe.

fornia where El Niño conditions can differ each year. Nonetheless, Dr. Ian Faloona, professor of atmospheric science at the University of California, Davis, said, “When it’s a really strong El Niño, it’s pretty consistent that most of California

is going to be considerably wetter...I think it’s very likely that we’re going to have significantly more rainfall this winter.”

El Niño may cause flooding issues on California coasts this winter. This is because of the sea level increase that naturally

due to warmer water. However, with climate change causing long term sea level rise and this El Niño occurring during the peak of an eighteen-year tide cycle, sea level rise will be at an all-time high. Also, the likely increased precipita-

tion will exacerbate the impact of flooding. Oftentimes, areas of Highway One near Monterey Bay flood. Additionally, Southern California may get hammered by extreme weather and mudslides, causing damages to nearby areas.

El Niño may cause issues across the globe as well. Regions like the Indian subcontinent and South Africa, where agriculture is prominent, are likely to experience drying that may cause food production to suffer. Drying like this also leads to worries of wildfires. Faloona explained, “The consequences are really region-dependent, but they’re likely to be so strong that they’ll kind of ripple through, and we’ll all experience them to some degree.”

This incoming El Niño is likely to be much warmer than in years past, possibly due to climate change. Faloona said, “It’s not like established scientific fact, but it’s pretty convincing that (El Niños) are going to become more and more problematic as one of the consequences of a warming climate.”

Your hockey sticks are about to get pricier

By Vinh-Phong Stanton
Times staff writer

On Aug. 22, Donald Trump levied 50% tariffs on \$20 billion worth of Canadian products. These tariffs cover products ranging from honey to hockey sticks.

The United States and Canada had been negotiating over the tariffs since President Trump announced them on July 20. These negotiations came to a head a little less than a month later and collapsed on the Friday before the tariffs were due to start.

The two countries have differing explanations for why the trade talks fell through. Canada said that the United States introduced last-minute demands, while the United States said Canada kept shifting the goalposts and was unwilling to sign already finalized agreements.

Government and economics teacher Mr. Karkazis said, “The Americans said the Canadians are being unreasonable. The Canadians said we’re tired of signing deals with (the Americans) with pencil, just erasing it and changing the deal whenever they want it.”

Trump invoked a statute from 1930

Category	EX
Dairy	Milk, cheese, butter, yogurt
Meat	Sausage, bacon, deli and lunch meat
Produce	Tomatoes, citrus
Drinks	Coffee, tea, beer, wine
Oil	Vegetable oil, margarine
Grain	Wheat, barley, oats, rice

Loren Webster / Terra Nova Times

A few (but not all) items affected by recent tariffs.

as legal authority for imposing the tariffs. Under Section 338 of the Tariff Act of 1930, the president can impose additional taxes up to 50% on imports when a foreign government unfairly discriminates against U.S. goods or places restrictions on them.

One of the sticking points centers around Canada’s laws that are designed to protect the French language and culture. The U.S. asked Canada to review laws related to video-streaming platforms promoting French-language content. Canada objected, as the U.S.-proposed changes

would weaken Canadian laws intended to protect French culture in Canada.

In retaliation for the new tariffs, Canada announced its own 50% tariffs on \$20 billion worth of United States imports. These new tariffs started on Sept. 8 and are designed to protect businesses and workers affected by the U.S. tariffs. The tariffs are intended to level the playing field in Canada, allowing Canadian-made items to compete with foreign-made goods. Canada has also threatened to suspend exports of electricity, potash an (important fertilizer), and other critical minerals such as nickel, uranium, and cobalt.

Mr. Karkazis explained, “A tariff is a tax on imported goods, usually designed to protect domestic products,” and the Trump Administration has used tariffs as a punitive measure, but a Goldman Sachs research study found that a portion of the tariffs could be passed on to customers. Goldman Sachs estimated the customer could pay up to 60% of the tariffs’ cost, a burden that can even be felt by students. Cameron Warringer (11) said, “At McDonald’s, I can’t even afford it anymore at this point. A 10-piece nugget is, like, eight bucks.”

Disastrous flooding hints at the carnage climate change has in store

By Jocelyn Lam
Times staff writer

On Aug. 26, 2026, 6,000 people went missing in sudden flash floods in Nepal and Tibet when a huge landslide caused a glacier to snap off, setting off a cascade of events leading to massive floods, destroyed villages, and thousands of missing.

“Landslides have been occurring as long as the mountains have been building,” Göran Ekström, a seismologist at Columbia University’s Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory, told Science Magazine, but “in areas where glaciers are disappearing, these landslides are occurring more frequently.”

According to the United Nations, fatal and frequent natural

disasters devastate 124 million people annually as the effects of climate change are no longer a thing of the future.

A climbing death toll of 1,450 has been confirmed after the floods swept across areas in central Nepal and the Nepal-China border in Tibet. Glacial ice and rock from the Himalayan Mountains hit the Lhende Khola river valley, creating a titanic surge

of mud, water, ice, and rocks that subsequently moved downstream, collecting everything in its path from trees, boulders, and debris to entire villages.

Flash floods impacted more than 84,270 people, with many left without safe water, healthcare services, reliable shelter, and schools. There have been hundreds of casualties from destroyed infrastructure alone.

According to AP Environmental Science teacher Ms. Gutierrez, the knock-on effect is “one change setting off a chain of other changes, including effects that we might not immediately connect to climate change.”

Rising global temperatures trigger a chain reaction that exacerbates natural disasters and

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Sports

New coach, same high enthusiasm

By Riker Guerrero
Times staff writer

It's football season, Tigers! The team is kicking off the school year with four home games, but when the play stops, it's time to look at the sidelines and watch your very own Terra Nova cheer teams.

This school year, Tiffany Martinez has taken over as both the varsity and JV cheer coach, replacing former coach Ms. Tosetti. However, this is not Coach Martinez's first time coaching for Terra Nova. Last year, Coach Martinez was the JV cheer coach, where she said she "worked closely with the JV cheerleaders to develop their skills, build their confidence... helped lead practices, prepare the team for games and performances, choreograph dances, and supported the athletes throughout the season both on and off the sidelines." All of those responsibilities for JV have largely been passed down to JV cheer captains Natalia Martinez (10) and Aubree Hawkins (10).

As practices began, varsity captains Paige Kettell (12) and Bianca Slater-Santos (12) had to negotiate a lot of changes both in and out of practices.



Dylan Jamora / Terra Nova Times

Cheer shows off their new uniforms at the first rally.

Slater-Santos said that, after school, she manages more cheer responsibilities than last year. "[I set] a lot more time aside for cheer to choreograph with Paige, and

a lot more work putting together music and envisioning routines," she said.

At the first rally of the year, both JV and varsity teams debuted a new rou-

tine, with varsity showing off their new uniforms with a loud and positive reaction from the school. The new, mostly black and gold uniforms (compared to last year's mostly white uniforms that JV wears), are, as Slater Santos described, "a lot more breathable and comfortable. They're also really cute, too."

Coach Martinez and both teams are equally excited about the upcoming year, with a bigger emphasis on stunts. Peyton Morganti (11) — a competitive cheerleader for the Nor Cal Elite Poseidons — spotted amazing starting potential in stunting this year, noting, "This year, we started off already being able to do the stunts we struggled with before, so I really think that we will accomplish some impressive stunts [this year.]"

Cheer's hard work is displayed at every football game, possibly including away games which Coach Martinez confirmed is in the early planning stage. Kettell is stoked for football games, as she and Slater-Santos "have already choreographed multiple routines and are almost done for the football season."

The arduous prep from the captains provides intriguing insight into an exciting year for fans of both football and cheer.

VB off to a tough start, but vows to persevere

By Emerson Bailey
Times staff writer

With the loss of graduated seniors and new additions to the varsity team, Terra Nova's volleyball team is destined for an enthralling season. The varsity team has faced difficult schools in their first seven games, including Archie Williams, Aptos, Half Moon Bay, and Lincoln. As of Sept. 20, their record stands at 4-6, after they beat San Jose High on Sept. 19. They have also won sets against multiple schools, and, despite their record, players and coaching alike are not worried about their season, approaching upcoming games with confidence.

Incoming athletes and graduating seniors mean big changes for Terra Nova's varsity volleyball team, promising a season full of exciting games

and competitive rallies. The Tigers started their season at home, facing four strong competitors on the court. While the first games may not have gone the Tigers' way, players and coaches alike are approaching the season with confidence.

"So far, [the underclassmen] have done a great job. I was able to fill the holes with a lot of younger players, which is good...They bring a new energy to the team. Our seniors will definitely be missed, but we have a good vibe about us, so I think we're going to be able to keep high spirits throughout every single game," explained varsity coach Nancy Blanchard.

Players share a similar outlook on their gameplay so far. "I think we are going to put in a good effort in all of our games," said Rose Dziuba (12).

Despite the slow start to the season, Coach Blanchard



Cedric Policarpio / Terra Nova Times

Kendra Kelley (12), right, and Rose Dziuba (12) stay ready.

remains optimistic about the season's potential. "We have played very high-level teams, so I think it is definitely pre-

paring us to stay intense and preparing us mentally to keep our wits about us," she said. "After a loss, we all come together and

talk about our errors," said Ava Goias (12) when asked how the team deals with loss. "Because I feel like a way you can fix what previously went wrong in games is to face it... we all come together [during practice], and we work it out as a team," Goias explained. Students on the volleyball team share that same optimism with hopes to make it to the Central Coast Section (CCS) post-season regional tournament. "Maybe.. You know that's a tough question. I think we could make it in [to CCS]...not really sure what would happen throughout [CCS games]," said Kaliyah Guevara (12). The varsity volleyball team currently is 1-2 in league, and will continue their league games throughout the season. Coach Blanchard also has confidence that her team will continue to use and develop their skills in order to make, and thrive in CCS.

Boys water polo teams are off to a strong, but young, start

By Gavin Beck
Times staff writer

Terra Nova water polo has a history of success, and this season looks to be no different. After losing a large group of seniors in the aftermath of the 2024 season, the team has been in need of some new athletes, but with this year's influx of underclassmen boys, water polo is at full strength.

When asked about the new season, boys water polo head coach Lily Hart said, "We have 19 freshmen and sophomores, and we have seven juniors and seniors, so this season, our varsity team is

going to have some brand-new first-year players on it that have been selected for their speed, but they have a lot to learn. So, they're kind of getting thrown in the deep end, if you will, like sink or swim. You know, it's going to be tough for them at first, but I'm pretty confident."

Freshmen will not be the only fresh addition to the team, however — Coach Steve is making his debut as the junior varsity coach, taking some of the weight off Coach Hart's shoulders.

"I'm really excited for the upcoming season. We have a strong freshman class. A lot of good swimmers and athletes," he said. "For the JV team, in particular, we have a good mix of ex-

perienced and talented sophomores to go with that freshman class. All the JV players have been putting in a lot of hard work in practice, and they've made great progress already. The JV squad also has a really good attitude. That might be my favorite thing so far. They come ready to work at every practice, and do a decent job of staying focused. Perhaps most importantly, they are able to keep each other's spirits up when we get into some of our tougher drills and conditioning."

The freshmen haven't been on the team long, but they are already all in. Junior varsity athlete Luke Grochowski (9) said his favorite parts of the sport are "definitely the scrimmages, and

the team work for sure, too, though."

A full water polo team consists of seven athletes in the water, six field players and one goalkeeper. However, over the course of 30 minutes of playtime, that often includes multiple substitutions. With only seven upperclassmen, there are spots that need to be filled, and the freshmen are here for it. One of these new varsity players, Andrew McMichael (9), is already having lots of fun. "My favorite thing about playing water polo has been all the people surrounding me and helping me get better. It feels good to be on varsity as a freshman, there is pressure to do good, but it is definitely worth it," he said.

Sports

Cross Country off to fast start

By Colin Vong
Times staff writer

Terra Nova cross-country started strong in its first two invitationals: the Crystal Springs Hillsdale Knights Joust and the Lowell Invitational. Many returning runners set personal records, and new members posted some surprising and impressive results. The team now has 25 boys and 14 girls, reflecting a loss of 13 boys but a gain of five more girls.

The early results from these first two races have given the team a hint of how runners are going to perform throughout the season. Coach Amanda, the cross country coach, said, “It was really exciting to actually see it all happening and the stampede at the beginning, the fighting to the end — it was just really fun to see everyone go all out and have fun.”

Pablo Scanziani, a captain of the team, started off the season hot, beating his own personal record by an entire minute, which is impressive considering his PR was 18:42 for the 2.95 mile race before the season even started. Scanziani said, “So far, I liked the Crystal Springs Hillsdale Knights Joust the best because I PR’d (personal record) by a lot, and yeah,



Yuval Oren

Pablo Scanziani (11) leads the pack at a recent cross-country meet.

it was a really fast race for me.” Scanziani’s improvement by a whole minute is significant in cross country, because over the course of a three mile race, shaving a minute off of your time could be

the difference between finishing in the top five or towards the middle of the pack.

Scanziani attributes his improvements to his training over the summer. “I increased my weekly mileage from 30 to

40 or 50 miles, and I ran a ton of hills,” he said. That last part is critical since the Crystal Springs course is very hilly. Scanziani had the best times among the boys on our team in both races. Ilan Oren, Ezra Dubnicoff, and Liam Kehoe were also near the top of the TN boys team.

Valerie Yen (12), a new member of cross country, posted impressive times, becoming the fastest female cross country runner on the team. In her first race at Crystal Springs, she achieved eighth place in her grade and 18th overall in her race out of 77 people. Yen attributes her progress to Coach Amanda’s practices. “I would say the practice is effective....Coach Amanda has been running for a long time... I trust her... and it’s helped me get faster,” Yen said. At the Lowell Invitational, she learned how to pace herself and was able to run for a longer time without feeling as tired in her second ever race. Ella Nah, also in her first year, performed well.

Although the season is only beginning, the results so far have shown that the cross country team will only continue to catch the attention of local competitors. With returning members improving and new members flying out of the gate, this cross country season is looking very bright for the Tigers.

Messi retires and TN students have big feelings

By Ilan Oren
Times staff writer

Lionel Messi announced his retirement from the Argentina National Football Team on Aug. 31, 2026, at the age of 39, marking the end of his long, successful career on the international stage. This announcement came shortly after Messi’s father’s death, announced earlier in August, with Messi writing, “After what happened with my dad, I am even more convinced than before.”

Lionel Messi made his international debut in 2005 at just 18. Over 21 years, Messi scored 125 goals in 207 appearances, the most of any South American player, and won international trophies with the team, including two Copa América titles (the main soccer tournament for national teams in South America) in 2021 and 2024, and most famously, the FIFA World Cup in 2022. The Ballon d’Or is

presented annually to the best international soccer player, and throughout his career, Lionel Messi has won a record eight.

But Messi’s illustrious career hasn’t been without hardships. In 2016, after captaining the national team in three consecutive Copa América finals and failing to win any, Messi briefly announced his retirement from international soccer, but returned after six weeks.

Lionel Messi’s announcement this time has brought strong reactions from soccer fans, like Terra Nova soccer player Kylan Klostad (11), who said, “I was in shock; I was sad.”

Some fans like Terra Nova varsity soccer player Claire Moore (11) “thought that he would play forever,” but others, like Terra Nova soccer coach Juan Venegas, noted that Messi already had “two Copa América and a World Cup, so it was a good decision to call it...Watching Argentina’s last World Cup, a lot of it depended on him, and



Kale Yee / Terra Nova Times

TN soccer players look to the pros for inspiration.

I think if he would’ve stayed, he would’ve slowed down, and Argentina would continue trying to play with him, and that would’ve been very difficult for them in the next Copa America.”

Klostad also noted how Mes-

si is “getting old, his bones are creaking, and it’s time to let it go.” The Argentine Football Association also wrote on its social media pages: “Thank you for everything, Leo. Thank you for representing Argen-

tina. Thank you for making us dream. Thank you for turning so many dreams into reality. The legend is yours, forever.” Messi’s retirement has left fans worldwide wondering: what is next for Argentina’s national team? Argentina National Football Team head coach Lionel Scaloni announced earlier in September that defender Cristian Romero would be the new captain of the national team. As for the team’s performance following Messi’s departure, Moore said, “A lot of [Argentina’s players] are already talented, but because it is Messi, it’s a big blow to the team.” Venegas said that the team’s future could go in many different ways: “They could go into a slump, just how after Maradona retired, and they had a large slump without winning trophies,” or they could have great success, with Venegas highlighting how “they’re still a very, VERY talented squad, so we’ll see how it goes.”

Tiger Tennis battles takes a big swing, despite having a small team

By Cash Kopping
Times staff writer

At the conclusion of the 2025 season, the tennis team lost several key senior players, leaving this year’s team facing a steep climb to rebuilding. With a strong coach and a positive team culture, the racket-wielding Tigers aim to correct this setback, and that all starts with putting

in the work to move forward.

Celeste Gaylon explained where the team’s focus is this season. “I think we’ve been a lot more focused on learning the skills and staying focused, which I think will make a big difference,” she said. Team captain Scarlett Rubinstein agreed, adding, “We are putting in the work, getting everyone to where they need to be, and definitely just keeping a positive spirit.”

One of the largest setbacks for our tennis team is the small quantity of players. Rubenstein said, “We joke about it because a lot of the teams we play have huge teams. It’s something we joke about, and I don’t think it brings down morale at all.”

However, there is no question that small-but-mighty can only go so far. Rubenstein explained that many of the other schools are located in

big tennis-playing communities, where kids start playing as youngsters, rather than starting in high school, as TN’s players tend to do, picking up a racket for the first time as freshmen.

Although playing on a small team of 12 players can be seen as a setback, it actually gives each player more opportunities to improve. When asked about Coach Andy Lee’s role, Rubenstein said, “He gives a lot of

specific advice, which works really well, especially when the team is the size that it is. When you have a small team, you can work more one on one.”

Coach Andy tries focusing on personal growth rather than looking at the record, he said, “For me, it’s not whether (they) win or lose the match, it’s did you meet your personal goals? Did you have fun? That’s the most important part.”

Opinions

Less emphasis on gender, please

By Veronica Oo
Times staff writer

Gender reveal parties are an outdated tradition, but a fun commemoration of a baby's sex nonetheless. Or are they?

Andrew Castillo (11) said, "It's fun seeing what the gender is, and the [reveal's] anticipation," but also noted that gender reveals shouldn't just be about gender: "Everyone should celebrate that one, you're having a baby, and two, whatever gender it is. So whatever gender that may be, you should still be happy."

The issue with gender reveals is not their practice, but the expectations people have surrounding them. People are often hoping for a specific gender, and when that gender isn't what they're hoping for, it can cause a lot of disappointment.

Mrs. Karkazis, a mother of two, said, "I feel like there's too much pressure on what everyone wants it to be, as opposed to just, 'Hey, you have this joy in your life and...you were able to have this'...you constantly see videos of people

putting on a gender party, and someone getting upset or overcelebrating a gender that they got...It takes the joy away."

Melisande Kahlich Glushkoff (12) has similar feelings on gender reveals: "It's very toxic in certain aspects...[especially] the way that gender roles are pushed onto babies from birth...gender reveals perpetuate that being like 'oh my god, it's such an important thing, pink or blue, will it be a boy or a girl?'" As if that really matters."

Glushkoff is not unfounded in this view of gender reveal parties perpetuating toxic gender roles. Some cultures favor boys because of the belief that men are stronger and better than women, and starting the

"battle of the sexes" at birth only serves to immediately start conditioning the baby (when they ARE born) on sexist values pedestaling men.

It can also make the child feel like they have to be a certain sex or presenting gender, and really, most gender reveals forget that intersex—both or neither sexes—exists for a baby.

Mrs. Z, a dance teacher with one child, said "I don't want my child to feel bound by the binary...for me, it is important to value things far beyond the gender binary and where you fall on that... [it perpetuates] a harmful patriarchy system. I'm not saying everyone should be gender non-binary...that's totally fine, but [sticking] to 'girls like pink' and 'boys like blue' and 'girls like Barbies' and 'boys like trucks' is harmful...it is also discounting to the very common experience of intersex people...and when [the baby] comes out, if they are, most likely they're gonna be lumped into one category or other based on something that can easily change throughout their life."

Gender reveals are not inherently bad, but if someone wants to throw a party, it would be healthier to focus more on family than gender.



A quick search on Instagram will turn up a plethora of gender-reveal photoshoots that span age and cultural background, showing how popular they are.

Bigger isn't better when it comes to gaming

By Zachary Ellison
Times staff writer

It's a simple fact that better hardware is correlated with sloppier developers and greedier studios — as technology progresses, there's more wiggle room for gigantic files and heavy processor loads for the sake of a realistic-looking game, making many games inaccessible to the average consumer who doesn't have a supercomputer just lying around. But it doesn't have to be this way.

Most games made by big gaming studios these days have file sizes over 100 GB, (the latest Call Of Duty is just a hair short of three times that) and outright require top of the line

hardware to run optimally. I'm not saying that older games are better in every way (frankly, many of them look horrible and have unintuitive controls), but I am saying that better computer technologies result in a noticeable decline in optimization and more of a focus on pumping out a pretty game in time to meet a deadline.

Several indie developers have created games that outperform games made by some of the biggest developers in video game history. In the 2025 game awards, Clair Obscur: Expedition 33 made by Sandfall Interactive (a studio founded in 2020 with just 34 people) won game of the year, with the runners up being Death Stranding 2 by Sony Interactive Entertainment

and Donkey Kong Bananza by Nintendo. Both of the runners-up were games made by multi-million dollar companies. Death Stranding 2's Playstation 5 version has a file size of 92.80 GB and a price tag of \$69.99 according to Yahoo Tech, and Donkey Kong Bananza has a quite small file, only 9 GB, but it is a Nintendo game exclusively for the Switch 2, so they can be extremely efficient with the game's file...but it does still cost \$69.99 for a digital copy according to Nintendo's official website. Expedition 33, on the other hand, costs \$20 less and is only 55 GB (per its store page on Steam), and it's available on all of the same platforms that the other games are. It just goes to show that bigger really isn't better.

This wasn't always the case, of course. Back in 1993, Id Software released the holy grail of optimization, DOOM. The saying "DOOM can run on anything" might be hyperbole, but it can't be denied that Id Software performed a miracle making it.

As Joe Hindy of CNET, a web-based tech guide said, "Doom can seemingly be played on anything with electricity running through it." Its file size is (somehow) only a couple megabytes, and it could run remarkably smoothly on the hardware of its era.

I was also able to get in touch with game developer Dylan Rigling and I asked him some questions about the decline of AAA games. "The steady decline of quality

in AAA games is the direct result of the 'Resting on Laurels' effect. AAA companies such as Blizzard and Bungie enjoyed their success, but were not vigilant in the defense of their products' integrity," he said.

You can see this kind of behavior in several AAA studios — they often pump out a game, then often abandon it to make a new game, leaving the people who enjoyed the previous one or can't play the new one behind.

It's horrible that the biggest names in gaming are more focused on making money over making a good quality, fun game. We can only hope that indie developers usher in a new age of gaming, where fun is prioritized over capital and the game can run on anything.

Cremation is popular, sure- but is it really the best option?

By Kaylin Watson
Times staff writer

Cremation has become an increasingly common alternative to traditional burials, often presented as the simpler, cheaper and more environmentally conscious choice. But as cremation becomes the norm, it's worth asking the question: is cremation actually the most environmentally ethical way to deal with someone's remains?

There are obvious reasons families choose cremation. It can cost less than a traditional burial, requires less permanent cemetery space, and can give families more flexibility in what they choose to do with their loved one's remains. For families already dealing with the emotional and financial weight of losing

someone, those factors can make cremation an appealing option. But convenience doesn't always match ethics.

Cremation still has its own environmental costs. The process requires significant energy and releases emissions like greenhouse gases and toxic metals into the atmosphere.

Anthropologist and historian Shannon Lee Dawdy of the University of Chicago challenged the marketing that cremation is automatically the greener choice: "There's this...misunderstanding...that [cremation is] a greener option than an embalmed burial, but it takes a huge amount of fossil fuels to get those furnaces hot enough, and all of that carbon goes up into the air," Dawdy said.

At the same time, though, traditional burial has its own concerns, including land use, embalming, and the

materials used for caskets and burials, meaning neither method is completely free of environmental consequence.

So if neither cremation nor burial is entirely harmless, what should determine which one is more ethical? For many people, it may have less to do with the environment and more to do with dignity, culture, and personal beliefs. Burial is an important tradition across many cultures and regions, while cremation carries its own significance in others. Calling one option universally more respectful ignores how differently people understand death and the treatment of the dead.

Cost is another major factor. A family may choose cremation because it is genuinely what they want, but financial pressure can also influence decisions made during an already trying time.

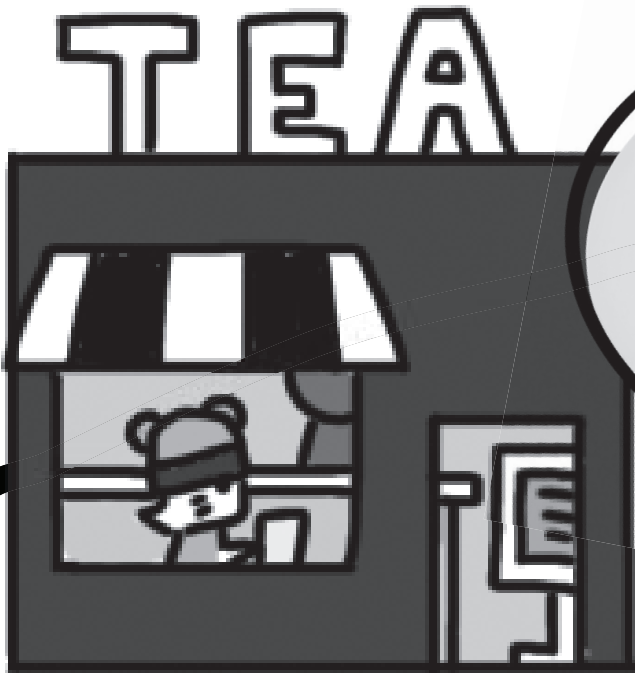
That raises another uncomfortable question: how much of the growing popularity of cremation is about personal preference, and how much is it about what people can afford?

Ultimately, I don't think cremation is inherently unethical, just as burial isn't inherently ethical. The problem is assuming that one is automatically the better choice. Choosing what happens to someone's remains involves environmental consequences, financial realities, cultural traditions, and deeply personal ideas about respect.

Cremation may be the right choice for many families. But if we are going to call it the more ethical option, we should first ask what we mean by "ethical" and whether convenience, cost, or environmental impact should determine the answer.

BOBA TEA SCAVEN

Hi, I am Tigey-locks! Come join me to look for the perfect boba!



I've heard of this shop, but I have high expectations. Nothing really stands out except for

Hey Tea



Happy



This store is primarily designed to be a grab-and-go spot. Their milk teas are tasty, and they offer a variety of options for sweetness. My favorite drink is Lychee Fruit Tea!

TP Tea



Their drinks are nothing special, but their drinks are fresh. This shop focuses on the quantity of tea.



Molly Tea



The service is a nice treat, but a bit too slow. The tea is smooth and makes for

Despite the long line, the tea is definitely worth it! They use high quality tea leaves and natural syrups. They also offer a wide variety of drink combinations that are dedicated to their brand. But of course, Jasmine Tea is their classic to-go! This is just right!



DRINKER HUNT

great things about
but I suppose my
s were too high.
ally stands out
its long line.



y Lemon

★

ks are good, but
pecial. Though the
esh and strong, the
more on the quan-
f drinks rather
han tea.

e and quality is always
at here! It might be a
weet for my liking, but
mooth and creamy, which
or a refreshing drink.

Sharetea

★★★★★

**Chicha San
Chen**

★★★★★

Hm, the aesthetic
and vibe of the place is nice,
but the prices are a bit
high, and the boba tea is
lackluster. I think this is not
the place.

T4

★★★★★



T4

The service makes this
place great, although some drinks can
taste awfully sweet. The lychee milk
tea is my pick, but the boba
was too soft for my taste.

Some of the
drinks are watered
down. But if you
are lucky, the
boba can be pur-
chased warm!
The prices are
reasonable,
too.

TEA



TEA



Tea FM

★★★★★

Focus On: Alex Martinez and Ms. Wilson

Dancer, environmentalist, and more

By Riker Guerrero
Times staff writer

Juggling school and various extracurriculars can be tough, but some people seem to just make it look easy. Alexandria “Alex” Martinez (12) is one of those people. Whether she’s dancing in the rallies or organizing beach cleanups. Alex has made a name for herself by being involved in so many activities—but how does she do it all? Chances are that you’ve seen Alex perform with the Terra Nova Dance Team at rallies, where she shows off her grooves and moves in the team’s show-stopping choreography. But many people don’t know that she’s been dancing her whole life. Alex dances at Westlake School of Performing Arts in Daly City and dances for their competition team, APT. Alex said that she started dancing at age three, “in those little tap, ballet classes with the little pink tutus. And then I started dancing competitively when I was like five or six, and I did all styles like ballet, tap, jazz, hip-hop, lyrical.”



Courtesy of Alex Martinez

Alex Martinez enjoys spending time outdoors with her family.

When the pandemic hit in 2020, Alex limited her dance to solely tap and hip-hop. “When I [entered] high school, I dropped tap and I just focused on school,” she said.

Alex joined the TN Dance Team for the last rally of her freshman year, just as most of the team was graduating. Her sophomore year, Alex became co-captain

of the team with one of her best friends, Ava Annino (12). Ava said that “[she] and Alex work really well together, feels like they’re really in sync [with each other.]” Ava also attributes Alex’s dance experience and creativity to how cohesive their leadership is, stating that it “makes it very easy for me to work [on a time crunch.]” Alex is also an active environmentalist, who is involved in the Pacifica Beach Coalition, where they “do clean ups at Esplanade [Beach] once a month.” Additionally, Alex has also taken AP Chemistry and is currently taking AP Environmental Science with Science Department Chair Mrs. Gutierrez. Through Mrs. Gutierrez, Alex is also a Youth Climate Ambassador with friend and ASB President Geneva Chan (12), who describes Alex as “really funny, chill, and driven.” Geneva hits the mark on Alex being driven, shown through Alex’s course rigor, extracurriculars, and time management, with Alex planning to go into nursing after high school. Her boyfriend Jarred Felipe (12) sums up Alex as a person in a few words, describing her as “very smart and beautiful.”

Since she can’t go to space right now, teaching math will do

By Charlotte Shannon
Times staff writer

Have you ever heard a teacher say they remember everything? Well, when Ms. Wilson says that she remembers everything, she is actually telling the truth. A fun fact about Ms. Wilson is that she has an eidetic memory, which means when she hears something, she can repeat it back verbatim. So, when she says she remembers everything, she isn’t lying. She has a photographic memory as well, which makes it so she can remember things very easily, which comes in handy as a teacher. Ms. Wilson came to Terra Nova during the 2024-2025 school year after five classes of students were left with no math teacher, and this is her third year teaching here, this year teaching Math 1 and Math 3. Before coming to Terra Nova, she worked at Sacred Heart in San Francisco

and Lydian Academy in Menlo. Ms. Wilson isn’t just a teacher — she’s also a student. Currently, she is attending San Francisco State University at night to earn her Masters of Education. Over the summer, she did math every single day to prepare for school. “It was very boring and very annoying — I just did math, all summer long,” she said. Ms. Wilson said, “I didn’t plan on being a teacher.” In college, she actually studied astrophysics. “I was working in the field of the oil industry, cleaning up oil spills, and I got laid off from my job when the economy crashed, and I just started teaching until I could find another job in the field,” she said. And the rest is history. Or, rather, math. TN math, specifically. Ms. Wilson has realized that she likes talking about math, and also really likes working with kids. “The most rewarding part is watching people who think they aren’t good at math work



Courtesy of Ms. Wilson

Ms. Wilson, standing tall above it all in Florence.

and realizing they are good at math and then their confidence grows,” she said. She also said that the hardest part of the job is getting students to stop talking while she is trying to teach

and keeping students focused. Ms. Wilson said, “I love math because it’s like a puzzle.” Out of the two subjects that she teaches, her favorite by far is Math 3. This is because she en-

joys teaching more advanced math, especially trigonometry. Other than being a math teacher, she dreams of being an astronaut, even saying that if she got the opportunity to be an astronaut tomorrow, she would do it. She said, “I’ve always wanted to be an astronaut. I would have loved to be an explorer, but that’s not a job anymore. The only place to explore really is space.” Outside of school, she enjoys watching the Green Bay Packers, hanging out with her nieces and nephews, hiking, and swimming. She also loves to travel. “I tend to gravitate towards less popular, more isolated destinations,” she said. Although Ms. Wilson never planned on being a teacher, she has found a career that allows her to share her love of math while helping students. She still hopes to explore space one day, but for now, she will continue to explore the math classroom with her students every day.

What statistic would you want your life to be remembered by?



“Steps taken.”
-Alice Dale (9)



“How much money I’ve donated.”
-Kai Dennis (10)



“My total screen time.”
-Zasha Gana Esperrago (11)



“How many times I’ve napped during school.”
-Jarred Felipe (12)



“Total foreign foods eaten.”
-Mr. Vilchez

Features

It's not too early to chart your path

By Kylie Kalugdan
Times staff writer

When you're just starting high school, applying to college may seem far away. Even though it seems like there's time to spare, in reality, the first two years of high school will turn out to be some of the most influential when it comes to building your academic record. By prioritizing what to prepare before junior year, it will make the application process go much smoother and lighten the load when it comes to shaping up your GPA.

When it comes to building a strong foundation, the most important thing to do is establish effective study habits, especially as you take APs, which are advanced placement courses that provide a college-level experience and enhance your GPA. These classes can earn you college credit depending on the score received from the AP exam. But before you sign up for every AP class offered, consider your interests.

Class of 2026 alumna Ava Litz explained, "I also suggest getting to know yourself by thinking about the classes that most interest you in school and reflect if that is something you may want to pursue long term."

Something else that shouldn't be



Courtesy of Ava Litz

Ava (left) worked hard starting her freshman year to get to UCB now.

ignored is prepping for the SAT and ACT. Even though California colleges aren't currently accepting these scores, there is discussion about reintroducing them, and out-of-state schools often require them. Getting a start on studying

earlier helps reduce stress, while also ensuring that you don't encounter anything unexpected. It's crucial to check if the colleges that pique your interest are test optional in the first place, especially because most selective colleges

have reverted to requiring test scores.

When asked on what advice she'd give to questioning freshmen and sophomores, guidance counselor Ms. English said, "I think being involved in school as much as possible helps students build a strong foundation - including clubs, sports, and other opportunities." Being able to take advantage of what high school provides is an excellent way to add to transcripts and resumes in order to get ahead. Things like developing a strong relationship with teachers is a great method to form some close connections.

And of course, researching colleges is really the way to go. Everyone has different opinions on what college is truly the best place to go, but what matters most is picking the one that stands out to you. When asked what her advice was on the matter, college and career counselor Ms. Spasic said, "We recommend students have the California College Student platform — it's a college research platform that helps with things like location, major, and helping students figure out their goals and aspirations."

Taking the time to really find out what your aspirations and interests will better prepare you for choosing what path to take on. When researching potential colleges, there's many variables to consider, such as location, cost, and what type of college.

Tips for writing your personal statement

By Max Herr
Times staff writer

Every year, thousands of students write personal statements for countless universities, and the internet is full of conflicting advice about how to write the "perfect" statement, but there are some pointers you can rely on.

A University of Washington admissions officer I spoke to said you should write "specific material that is unique to you. A non-standard job, a hobby that you have or had, a recurring habit or object, really anything that makes your way of thinking clear."

When it comes to what not to do, an admissions officer at University of Michigan listed a few essay topics that do not portray a unique or good student. "We see many essays about sports injuries, achievement lists, and

hardship stories that do not show growth," they said. This does not mean you can not write about sport injuries or hardship, but focus on how you learned and grew from the experience.

Naia Wolfe, who graduated from Terra Nova last year and now attends Boston University, said, "It's all about how you portray your experience," focusing on the more "impactful experiences" and staying away from just "summarizing every single feat you've accomplished."

The UMich admissions officer added, "Something that surprises some students is that you should not be tying your personal statement to your major" because it "tends to make an essay generic," which makes sense if you think about it. There are only so many ways to explain why you want to be a computer science major.

With AI writing tools now

widely available, you may wonder whether admissions officers can tell if an essay was written by AI. "We don't run essays through AI-detectors; they're too unreliable, and we don't want to risk flagging a student's writing based on a false positive," said the UMich officer. Instead, readers rely on experience built from reading thousands of essays each season. AI writing is generic, which is particularly bad with something like a personal statement.

That also doesn't mean AI use is unrestricted. Every top college's official policy states that all writing, including the personal statement, must be the student's own work. That said, Wolfe said that you shouldn't "be afraid of asking the counselors for help revising" as they can provide insight, especially with how many personal statements they have experienced.



Courtesy of Naia Wolfe

Naia (far right) attends college in Boston.

Personal Statements can be overwhelming, but as long as you diversify your essay. This includes not writing it with AI, or trying to impress college ad-

missions. The best thing you can do to impress them is to portray your specific way of thinking and how you've grown throughout your life in a clear way.

Do you really need to take the SAT or the ACT to get into college?

By Gavin Beck
Times staff writer

In 2025, approximately 25% of California high school students took the Standardized College Admission Test, otherwise known as the SAT. Since its release in 1926, the SAT has been, for the most part, commonly accepted as a test for college readiness. Nationwide, it has functioned as a way to prove your academic preparedness for college.

However, starting with the fall of 2021

applications, California public schools instituted a test-blind policy, meaning they refuse to look at SAT scores on students' applications. I tried to get in touch with someone from the UC system to ask them about this decision, but when I interviewed a University of California admissions officer, all they would say is "the SAT is not a requirement for UC's anymore" and that I should contact another UC-related branch, which I did with no luck. However, in an official statement from May 2020, UC Board of Regents Chair John A. Pérez said,

"I think this is an incredible step in the right direction toward aligning our admissions policy with the broad-based values of the University" before voting to eliminate the SAT and ACT for admissions.

While the UCs and CSUs may refuse to consider SAT/ACT scores, a majority of California private schools and many out of state schools still require the SAT or ACT.

Bernadette Joseph (12) said she is considering "a lot of out of state (schools), which is why I thought to take the SAT."

Other students are shooting for test-blind UCs but still took the SAT to en-

sure a chance at alternative schools. Valerie Yen (12) said, "I took it once in May — I'm mostly planning to apply to CSUs and UCs, but there are a few out of state colleges I want to apply to like (University of Michigan) and University of Maryland and University of Oregon."

The SAT has served as a significant portion of college applications for decades. Even if you are applying to UCs and CSUs, you may want to take the SAT as a back-up plan in case you change your mind at the last minute since the SAT is only administered seven times a year.

The tricky balance of museum art

By Kaylin Watson
Times staff writer

Imagine traveling across the country for an exhibition built around a single masterpiece. You get there, walk into the gallery...and the masterpiece is nowhere to be found.

Art loans sound deceptively simple. One museum has something another museum wants, so they send it over. In reality, getting a painting from one gallery to another can involve years of planning, conservation assessments, insurance, specialized transportation, and enough paperwork to make the average museum goer wonder if the painting is being admitted to an exhibition or being elected to office.

In 2023, English Heritage proved just how complicated that decision can get when it refused to lend Johannes Vermeer's *The Guitar Player* to a major exhibition in the Netherlands. The reason? The painting was considered too fragile to travel. Documents later revealed that experts such as Professor Kerstin Kracht, a vibration-migrant expert, had described the risk of damage as negligible, but Eng-



Kaylin Watson / Terra Nova Times

Art exhibits are enjoyed by lots of people, regardless of their age.

lish Heritage still decided against the loan.

Ester Harrison, Registrar of Loans and Exhibitions at the Harry Ransom

Center, a world-renowned museum located at the University of Texas, Austin, said in an email interview with the

Times that museums consider everything from borrowing institution's security and the environmental conditions to the academic quality of the exhibition.

Timing matters, too. Harrison said national loan requests require at least a year of advance notice, while some requests require up to two. A museum might also say no because the artwork is already promised to another exhibition or it's been loaned too many times. Yes, even paintings need a break.

The artwork's physical condition can be an even bigger obstacle. If a piece is too fragile to withstand transportation, handling, or changes in environment, keeping it home may be the only option.

But who makes this decision? At the Ransom Center, a loan committee made up of the registrar, curator, conservator, and preparator evaluates the request. The director ultimately decides whether to approve or decline it.

Joanne Fenn, who works with museum collections and loans at KSUM, has seen just how complicated that decision can become. In an email interview with

See Art on page 15

Energy drinks pose serious hidden health risks

By Angelo Chetcuti
Times staff writer

School, sports, and a social life: energy drinks seem like a good way for students to manage long days. However, the drinks' health impacts raises important questions about whether they are a safe choice.

Students consume energy drinks for a variety of reasons. Andrew Castillo (11) told the Times, "I try to do at least two every week," mainly for a caffeine boost while working out. Abigail Oeffinger (10) said, "I just drink them whenever my parents aren't around."

Oeffinger's parents' desire to limit their child's access to energy drinks comes from a logical place. Caffeine consumption among teenagers is a significant health concern. According to the CDC, 62.6% of U.S. youth



Angelo Chetcuti / Terra Nova Times

Many students rely on energy drinks to get through the day.

consumed caffeine on a given day between 2021 and 2023, with youth ages 12 to 19 consuming an average of 30.7 milligrams per day, but the amount of caffeine in energy drinks is much higher than that. A 16-ounce Monster contains 160 milligrams of caffeine, while a

can of Celsius contains 200 milligrams. Even an 8.4-ounce Red Bull contains 80 milligrams.

Dr. Maya Kumar, a physician specializing in adolescent health, said most energy drinks contain between 100 and 300 milligrams of caffeine per serving, but that the American Acad-

emy of Pediatrics recommends that youth ages 12 to 18 limit caffeine to a maximum of 100 milligrams per day, meaning that most of the energy drinks we see students drinking on campus have more caffeine in one can than kids should have in a day. Dr. Richard Chung, an adolescent-medicine physician, said the main effects of energy drinks come from caffeine, sugar, and other stimulant ingredients such as taurine and guarana. These ingredients can cause elevated blood pressure, anxiety, headaches, and poor sleep. Chung also said these effects can become stronger when energy drinks are combined with physical activity, alcohol, or other substances.

According to a study published by Epic Research, the number of teens going to the ER for caffeine-related overdoses has doubled since 2017. In their

report, the researchers wrote, "While rare, caffeine overdoses, or ingesting too much caffeine in a short period of time, can lead to severe arrhythmias, heart attacks, and even death." The team reviewed over 225 million ER reports to understand patterns of caffeine use in teens.

Teenagers' bodies are different from adult bodies because teens are still developing. Dr. Chung said the cardiovascular and nervous systems of adolescents "may be more sensitive to caffeine's effects." He also said the combination of caffeine, high sugar content and other stimulants has not been well studied in teenagers' developing bodies.

Dr. Kumar also warned that high doses of caffeine can increase blood pressure and heart rate and can cause abnormal heart rhythms. Other possible effects include shaking, dizziness, irritability and sleepiness.

Sure, you're sick... but do you really NEED to stay home?

By Colin Vong
Times staff writer

School is an important place to learn and grow, but if you're ill, then how can you learn anything? Terra Nova school policy says that if you aren't going to school, you must call the attendance office to be excused; however, it doesn't explicitly say you must stay home if you are sick.

Staff member Tenishia Kavanaugh, who manages our attendance records, said, "Students are required to stay home if they are vomiting or have a fever. They should not return until symptoms have improved and they have been fever free for 24 hours without the use of fe-

ver reducing medications." The rules are clear for fevers and vomiting, but things get murky when it comes to run-of-the-mill colds or just not feeling 100%.

Many students come to school when they are sick because they have tests or presentations in their classes, and they feel like if they miss the day, their grade will drop. Maxx Rodriguez said, "If it's not bad, and I can focus, I don't wanna deal with makeup work." Every student has six classes and oftentimes has homework that they don't want to miss. This leads to many people coming to school even when sick, worrying more about their grades than health.

Students may also feign being ill to skip school entirely. They may tell their

parents that they are sick and cannot attend school, or even tell their parents outright that they do not want to go to school that day, using the excuse of being sick to skip a class they do not like, avoid a test, or simply take a day off of school.

Kavanaugh said, "Parents often use illness and doctor or dental appointments as an excuse in order to have an excused absence on the attendance record," even though the student is not actually ill. Some students may feel too tired to attend school, claiming to be sick when there is no actual illness, making it harder to determine when staying home is actually necessary. This can create pressure on students who are actually sick to prove that they are sick enough to stay home,

making the line between being too sick and not wanting to attend school unclear.

The public health guidelines provide a clearer boundary. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "If a child's needs while sick disrupt school staff's ability to teach and care for other students, the child should remain at home." Students, when coming to school sick, may often cough or sneeze, disrupting the class and/or being contagious, leading experts to believe that staying home would be a better idea.

Students struggle to balance their health, their grades, and their responsibilities, but the experts are clear: if you're too sick to learn or your illness is going to keep other students from learning, stay home.

Features

Pacifica has some strange laws

By Max Levin
Times staff writer

There are countless laws tucked away in municipal, state, and federal codes. Some of these laws are well known – speeding, theft, assault – but others are obscure and rather random. Ranging from limitations on yearly garage sales to skateboard occupancy restrictions, these laws are as strange as they are surprising.

Nestled in the Pacifica Municipal Code lies Title 4, Chapter 7, Article 17, Section 5, regulating the use of skateboards, roller skates, and other devices of that type. 4-7.1705 (b) PMC is pretty self explanatory — it states that you are not allowed to ride a skateboard, roller skates, or other similar devices between sunset and sunrise. Subsections e, f, and h start to get stranger, however, dictating that you are not allowed to attach someone using these devices to another vehicle, you are not allowed to use these devices where you cannot see the crest of a hill or around a curve, and, most surprisingly, multiple people may not ride the same skateboard at a time, respectively. If a minor is caught in violation of this provision, they may be required



Courtesy of Mason Heywood

Bizarrely, it is illegal for two or more people to ride a skateboard together.

to write an essay on the safe use of their device and submit it to the department of public safety, which would now be considered the police department.

Skateboards are not the only regulated activity in the City of Pacifica,

however. Section 5-15.02 (a) PMC states that “Garage sales shall be limited to three (3) such sales in each calendar year for each individual or group.” The same code states that items sold at garage sales must not be used for less

than six months, although that seems like it would be difficult to enforce.

More niche than skateboards and garage sales, the Pacifica Municipal Code regulates how to operate a fortune telling establishment. Under section 5-6.01 PMC, “It shall be unlawful for any person to carry on, practice, or profess to practice the business of astrology, palmistry, phrenology, life reading, fortune-telling, cartomancy, clairvoyance, clairaudience, crystal gazing, hypnotism, mediumship, prophecy, augury, divination, magic, or necromancy within the City without having procured from the Chief of Police a permit for such activity.”

If you’re confused, you’re not alone.

This code is “one of those provisions that reflects an earlier era of municipal regulation,” said Councilwoman Mary Bier. “During that time there was a very active ‘psychic community’ including a very visible sign at a house along highway one (Rockaway) that said ‘Palm Reading.’ I remember the people at the church next to the house were very vocal against that.”

The main rationale for this law is to prevent financial fraud, deceptive

See Laws on page 14

Strong passwords protect from getting hacked

By Zach Ellison
Times staff writer

The internet is crawling with nefarious individuals, modern-day highwaymen who want to break into your accounts and steal whatever they can. Your first line of defense on the internet is the noble password.

However, not all passwords are created equal. Making one that’s effective can seem tricky, but it’s actually fairly simple.

Several online sources such as the CISA’s official website say that you should have a number of things: at least 15-16 numbers, letters, and other more obscure characters. Now, these can be hard to remember, so it’s often recommended to utilize a password manager to keep them all in one place and automatically fill them in when needed.

You should also turn on two-factor authentication, because (despite being an annoying extra step), even if your password is compromised, the person trying to get into your account would either have to fool you into letting them log in or crack into another of your accounts to get access to the first one.

Passwords often seem tedious at first — you visit a website, it prompts you to log in or create an account, you know the drill. This can make it tempting to re-use simple passwords that you can easily remember.

William Tsang (11) said, when being asked how much effort he puts into making a new password, “I mean, it’s not like 1234 or anything, but like when Google recommends one of those passwords, and it’s just like a ton of random uppercase and like lowercase

letters, I don’t do that. I use a lot of the same passwords over and over for different sites.”

Our school district’s Director of Technology, Jacob Meyer, had a few tips for everyone when it comes to creating a password:

1. Avoid the obvious. Skip things like your name, birthday, “password123,” or a pet’s name – these are the first things someone would guess.

2. Try a passphrase. A string of random, unrelated words is often easier to remember and just as strong, for example: PurpleTiger\$Jumps47! or CloudBench-Rocket9.

3. Use a different password for every account. If one password gets leaked or guessed, you don’t want it unlocking everything else you own.

4. Don’t share your passwords. Not with friends, not with anyone — even peo-



Zoe Lim / Terra Nova Times

Maintaining online security and info with passwords

ple you trust can accidentally put your account at risk.

5. Consider a password manager. Apps like these

can generate and remember strong, unique passwords for you so you don’t have to memorize dozens of them.

All you ever wanted to learn about nostalgia

By Ella Nah
Times staff writer

A song, smell, or familiar place can suddenly evoke feelings from the past, a strange mix of happiness and longing for something that can never quite be relived. This unique feeling is known as nostalgia. Whether it brings happiness, sadness, or both, nostalgic memories shape how people remember events.

Bryer Rose (12) believes nostalgia can make the past seem better than it really was. Rose said she sometimes feels nostalgic even about recent experiences, such as attending swim

meets at a familiar location. “It feels nostalgic even though I was at the pool only a year ago or less,” she said.

Rose isn’t the only one who feels nostalgic about recent events. Junior Sophia Rachael also sometimes feels nostalgic about experiences that happened surprisingly recently, including “classes that I had last year or even sometimes getting off the phone with a friend.”

Songs can also bring back strong memories. For Rose, the Red Hot Chili Peppers remind her of her childhood. “When a Red Hot Chili Peppers song plays, it brings me back to my dad driving me to my place when I was younger,” she said.

Mr. Willemse, AP Psychology teach-

er at Terra Nova, explained that nostalgia is connected to our episodic memories, which are “memories of our lives.” Certain stimuli can become associated with these memories. He explained, “Whenever I hear Green Day, it reminds me of playing Mario Kart 64 with my friends as a teen while we listened to Green Day.”

Sophia Rachael (11) believes people often remember the positive parts of the past more than the negative ones. “People really like to look at things with rose-tinted glasses,” she said. AP Psychology teacher Mr. Willemse agreed with Rachael that people remember the past more positively than it actually was, saying that “all humans are

biased, and maybe our biases try to remember the good, nostalgic memories.”

Dr. Jesse Rissman, a professor of psychology at UCLA who researches autobiographical memory, explained that there is not a single “nostalgia center” in the brain, but rather a network of memories and emotions that work together. According to Rissman, “a cue such as an old song, smell, or familiar place can trigger associations that can help reactivate a network of memories and emotions.” However, he noted that nostalgia can also be bittersweet, since “remembering a wonderful period of your life can make you happy that it happened while simultaneously making you sad that it is over.”

Teams make big moves (or not)

By Max Levin
Times staff writer

Offseason is supposed to be a time to rest and recharge, but this past NBA off-season has come with big moves and surprises. Free agency signings, trades, and stunning draft classes have dominated this summer, leaving the league with a more competitive outlook than ever.

The most famous move of the offseason was LeBron James’ move to Philadelphia. James, who is an astounding 41 years old, played 60 out of 82 games last season and averaged 20.9 points per game. In a surprising move, during free agency, James left the Los Angeles Lakers, his team of eight seasons with whom he won an NBA championship in 2020. Many fans speculated that LeBron would return to his original team, the Cleveland Cavaliers, or the Miami Heat, while others believed he would sign with the Golden State Warriors. Eventually, James signed with the Philadelphia 76ers on a two-year, \$7.9 million contract, with an average annual value of \$3.8 million. “I think if he’s in it for the love of the game, it’s fine if he takes a pay cut if it makes him happy,” junior Liam Kehoe said.

Due to LeBron’s move, Philadelphia is renowned as one of the biggest “win-



Cedric Policarpio / Terra Nova Times

The Warriors are potentially one of the losers of the offseason.

ners” of the offseason. Luca Evans, the Warriors beat reporter for the San Francisco Chronicle said, “I think the biggest winner had to be the 76ers. I mean, just, you know, really positioning themselves well in the Eastern Conference. Not only the move for Jaylen Brown and upgrading there...but also landing LeBron

James and suddenly that roster, Tyrese Maxey, Joel Embiid, I think they’re a pretty clear offseason winner and I think a really strong contender in the Eastern Conference.” Besides the 76ers, the Miami Heat had one of the better off-seasons, adding power forward Giannis Antetokounmpo and veterans such as

Klay Thompson and Tim Hardaway, Jr. The biggest loser debate is mostly split between the Denver Nuggets and the Warriors. Evans noted that “they have arguably probably the greatest player in the world in Nikola Jokic, and not really seeming to make aggressive moves to maximize his prime or reshuffle the roster.”

“Biggest loser? I hate to say it – It’s probably the Warriors; we only made two moves” said NBA fan William Gately (10). The Warriors had a particularly disappointing offseason, prioritizing extending existing stars like Draymond Green and missing opportunities to sign free agents like James and Jaylen Brown, which left fans frustrated.

The Warriors also lost several depth pieces the likes of Pat Spencer and Quinten Post. With star point guard Stephen Curry’s impending contract expiration and retirement, Evans says the Warriors are the team that will be panicking most in the next few seasons.

This year’s draft class will also make its mark this season. The class was uniquely deep with a stacked top three overall picks in AJ Dybansta, Darryn Peterson, and Cameron Boozer going to the Washington Wizards, Utah Jazz, and Memphis Grizzlies, respectively.

“There is potential for a lot of impact,” noted Evans.

Prichard Colon dies, nearly 11 years after suffering ‘rabbit punch’

By Max Levin
Times staff writer

Last month, former boxer Prichard Colon died after being in a vegetative state for almost 11 years. Colon was an undefeated boxing prospect before suffering a brain injury in 2015 due to an illegal strike to the back of the head.

At 16-0 with 13 wins by knockout, he was an extremely

entertaining fighter and a fan favorite. However, during his fight with fellow undefeated boxer Terrel Williams, he suffered a punch to the back of the head, an illegal strike in almost all boxing and MMA promotions.

The reason punches to the back of the head are banned is that the back of the head is an extremely sensitive area; the brainstem is located at the base of the skull, and it is relatively unprotected from strikes com-

pared to other areas of the brain.

According to the Journal of Applied Sports Science, “It is considered especially dangerous because it can damage the cervical vertebrae and subsequently the spinal cord, which may lead to serious and irreparable spinal cord injury. (It) can also detach the victim’s brain from the brain stem, which can kill instantly.”

Unlike the front and sides of the head, the back of the head has less thick bone to protect

the brain, creating a weak point that, when struck, can cause severe brain damage. A strike landed to this area is called a “Rabbit Punch,” named for the strike hunters make on a rabbit they have caught in order to kill it quickly. It is severely frowned upon in combat sports because of its potential to cause the damage Colon suffered.

After Colon’s fight with Williams, Colon was rushed to the hospital and eventually

diagnosed with a severe brain bleed. Doctors performed surgery, and Colon remained in a coma for 221 days afterward.

Despite the damage, Colon managed to survive, although remaining in a vegetative state and requiring constant medical care. As a result of Colon’s injury, the WBC reinforced safety regulations, implemented a zero-tolerance policy for Rabbit Punches, and adopted stricter medical protocols.

Jumps

Elections

Continued from Page 1

Shore’s K-5 students to Sunset Ridge. This was a controversial decision, with many parents saying that it was rushed and did not take community input into account. It set off a tsunami of protest, law suits, and even an attempt to start a new charter school in Pacifica, all of which failed to prevent the closures.

As candidates began making appearances at meet-and-greet events, the perceived lack of transparency was a major

theme among candidates. Candidates stated that the board did not display all the information regarding the budget. Tracey Simmons made their position on the matter clear, saying, “I believe everyone in the community should be able to go onto the district website and see the full budget, every single line item, without anything hidden. When the board makes decisions about things like closing a school, we shouldn’t have any questions about why that is. We should be able to look and see very clearly why they came to that decision.”

However, the incumbents argue that

they are building upon a successful record. At a recent candidate meet-and-greet, Elizabeth Bredall said that she is proud of her work on the workforce housing project, which will house teachers and staff at below-market rates at the old Oddstad campus upon its completion. Bridget Hardt has similar priorities as many of the other candidates, also prioritizing fiscal stability and community engagement.

With the election only a month away, the candidates’ campaigns are already in full swing. Yard signs and door hangers are already displayed all across Pacifica. Door knockers have also been

canvassing neighborhoods. Coastside United Indivisible and Pacifica Democrats have hosted forums where candidates presented their views and pitched their platforms. Voting begins when mail-in ballots are sent out on Oct. 5.

With many Terra Nova seniors able to vote in this year’s election, it is crucial to be informed about the candidates. Government teacher Mr. Krupp said that it’s important to vote in every election; he said, “It’s almost more important to vote (in local elections) because...smaller elections can be decided by a few votes, there’s plenty of historical context for that.”

Laws

Continued from Page 13

practices, and scams from occurring.

All of these laws are set by the city council, and the steps to becoming a law are simple. First, a community member identifies a law that should be changed. Next, it is reviewed by city

staff and the city attorney. When the change is proposed, the city has three options: repeal the law, amend the law, or repeal and replace it. This change is then proposed at a public meeting, where the public is able to give their comments. The city council then votes to adopt or reject the proposed change.

If the change becomes law, it typically takes approximately 30 days for it

to be adopted, and the municipal code is then updated to reflect the new law. But then the hard part comes: making sure people hear about the change.

Remember: although these laws may be unknown, not knowing about them does not make you exempt. The Pacifica Police Department still has full legal authority to enforce the law, no matter how obscure it is.



Jumps

Mutti

Continued from Page 1

bag containing a signed football, a team shirt, and a photo, and were introduced individually to the group. From there, students were led to a viewing area, separated from the general public, to watch 49ers players train up close. Family members and other guests, parents, coaches, and siblings were welcome to attend alongside the students.

Attendees ranged from sixth graders to graduating seniors and represented a mix of sports,

including football and Ultimate Frisbee. Participants met John Lynch directly and took photos with him; several also spoke with his daughters, who play college sports, with some attendees discovering that they had actually had connections to each other through school.

Mutti said, “Sometimes I think a lot of people just doubt themselves as a student and an athlete, which I tend to do a lot, especially when I compare myself to others.” Spending the day surrounded by peers carrying similar workloads offered a different perspective than

the day to day. “Seeing other people and their accomplishments also just made me feel good about myself and happy for other people,” she said.

The John Lynch Foundation also offers scholarship opportunities to program participants on an ongoing basis, a detail she said was discussed during the event. Mutti also plans to apply in the future, showing her continued academic and athletic effort and now, a direct connection to the foundation as reasons for optimism. “If I keep on working hard and putting in effort, then I can make it far,” she said.



Miranda Mutti in action.

Walls

Continued from Page 1

Walls, has a huge impact on how students do at school. According to the American Psychological Association, “Students are more likely to engage in healthy behaviors and succeed academically when they feel connected to school. Research has shown that young people who feel connected to their school are less likely to engage in many

risk behaviors...are also more likely to have better academic achievement, including higher grades and test scores, have better school attendance and stay in school longer.” A big part of Breaking Down the Walls is the student leaders, so how were our student leaders’ experiences at this year’s assembly, and how did they compare to last year’s?

This past installment of Breaking Down the Walls was senior Kali Guevara’s second year as a student leader, and

she’s had a great experience at both assemblies. “When I got recruited to be a leader last year, I definitely knew I wanted to do it just because I like talking to new people, and I think I’m a very social person,” she said. Guevara said that she had “a great group of kids both years, and everyone did really well with making new connections and talking to new people.”

Fellow senior and two-time student leader Miguel Cabello described how, last year, he

was student leader for a group with several seniors and how, “at first, it was kind of awkward, but then I tried to put the grade level aside and just try to see them as people I’m friends with and peers, and that was a very big thing.” Cabello’s advice to aspiring student leaders is to “just be open” and “as long as you’re there doing what you’re supposed to do, it can be a great experience for not only you, but for the other people around you as well.”

Disaster

Continued from Page 4

their impact on civilians. Ms. Gutierrez explained, “A wildfire doesn’t just burn trees and destroy habitats. It can also create unhealthy air, affect people’s health, damage homes and infrastructure, disrupt schools and

businesses, and have a major economic impact. The loss of vegetation can also increase erosion and flooding when heavy rain eventually comes.”

Higher temperatures prolong dry seasons, increasing the likelihood of wildfires, droughts, and early snowmelt, not to mention melting glaciers, which can set off landslides in mountain

ranges like the Himalayas. The rise in ocean temperatures allows excess heat energy to fuel storms, which makes winds stronger and hurricanes more powerful. Water evaporates at a quicker rate when it’s warmer, leading to heavy rainfall and severe flooding. Additionally, the Earth’s abnormal temperature causes sea level rise, mak-

ing coastal regions vulnerable to flooding as tides grow higher and storms become more severe.

All of this planetary carnage can feel overwhelming, but global change starts with small changes, whether it’s eating less meat or walking to school. As Ms. Gutierrez said, “You don’t have to start a huge movement to make a difference.”

Art

Continued from Page 12

with Terra Nova Times, she said she has encountered situations in which a conservator advised against an artwork traveling because of its fragile condition, only for the director to approve the loan anyway.

That conflict allows for a bigger question: is art meant to be protected or is it meant to be seen? “A museum by definition exists as an educational resource, we should make collections accessible through exhibitions, loans, and research,” Harrison said. She added, however, that protecting the artwork and reducing

risk must remain a priority.

For the public, the answer might seem obvious. If a museum owns an important piece, shouldn’t the people get to see it? Samantha Gonzalez (11) said, “I like to see other perspectives on art and the different ways people see the world.”

But ownership comes with responsibility. A painting isn’t

just a decoration that can be shipped around whenever someone asks nicely. Every trip exposes it to transportation, handling, and environmental risks. Sometimes, the most responsible thing a museum can do for the same of preservation is tell today’s audience, “Sorry, no can do — you’ll just have to come back on your next trip.”

Daisy

Continued from Page 3

water refill stations. Dahlberg said, “Everyone was just there helping each other out like buying water for other people...[the atmosphere] was so positive and

it was so much fun.” She said that she felt the mostly female community made the festival more positive than other events.

Daisy Chain Fields’ mission was made very clear throughout the festival. The stages were decorated with pins similar to the styles of 1970s women’s lib-

eration movements with phrases like “Bans Off Our Bodies,” “Freedom Without Limits,” and “Reproductive Rights are Human Rights.” The event had a variety of interactive art installations, including artist and activist Yoko Ono’s wish tree, where attendees could write

their wishes on paper tags and attach them to the tree.

Some included wishes for universal healthcare and world peace. A walkway also had painted quotes by influential women like memoirist and poet Maya Angelou and political activist Angela Davis.

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Photo booth culture will never die

By Maile Velichko
Times staff writer

We may be in an age of high tech smart phones, but people still like physical photos, especially if they come from photo booths. From classic, grainy photo strips to newer digital versions, people love to physically capturing their memories.

Photo booths, both vintage and digital, have become twenty-first-century pop culture staples, even though they are over a hundred years old, dating back to the 1930s-1940s.

The cell phone has proven to be a worthy competitor to the photo booth as one can take almost limitless pictures for free and of a higher quality.

But don't count photo booths out. They have made a massive comeback, especially with the introduction of the digital photo booth, which allows customization aspects such as frames and filters. They can be seen all over social media, as sharing one's experience and different poses has been having a massive effect on influencing others to go to photo booths as well.

Jolee Betts (11) said that after seeing photo booths on social me-



Alyssa Jenkins / Terra Nova Times

Mr. Gounod got into the photo booth action at senior prom last May.

dia she states "I feel like I wanna go [to photo booths] because I want to recreate [different poses] with my friends." Pho-

tooths allow for going out with friends and adorning fun accessories and props. Having multiple props that can be

switched out provide a more fun experience. Unlike a selfie, photo booths provide more privacy, allowing for a fun and silly experience without fear of judgement.

Photo booths depict more raw and authentic memories, unlike digital pictures, which get lost deep in our camera roll. Physical items carry more weight both physically and emotionally. Decorating items or one's room with pictures can turn a fun hang-out into a more sentimental memory.

Fia Wolfe (11) said, "I think photo booths are fun—they're an experience... there's something different about owning a physical photo compared to a selfie" Although using phones are cheaper and more convenient, physically capturing one's memories shows a primary reason as to why photo booth culture is thriving in a time of such [advanced] technology.

From the POTOBOX in Stonestown mall to the Photo Booth Museum in San Francisco to school dances, the photo booth is alive and well. It's more than just the photos, it's the experience and capturing emotion and embracing the moments that will soon turn into memories. Destiny Reyes (12) put it best: "[photo booths] are a way to re-kindle and create more memories with each other."

Horror movies reflect what scares us most

By Six Silva
Times staff writer

Some people hear the word "horror" and imagine melting wax flesh, cherry-red blood, the Wilhelm scream, and the thrill of being scared. However, horror can be much more than that. It reveals the fear that lingers in the subconscious of modern society—or the fears of whomever is making the movies. In the 1950s, it was monsters manifesting as physical fears of communism and the threat of nuclear annihilation. In the 1970s, movies centered around threats to communities or the challenging of tradition. In the 1990s, slasher flicks reflected the rising fear of "stranger danger" and stories around serial killers. Now, in the 2020s, Gen Z filmmakers try to reveal what our generation fears: loneliness in a world that feels unreal. Both "Backrooms" and "Obsession" express the flipside of easy access

to technology: the disconnection from others and the world.

In "Backrooms," Clark is struggling with the burdens of an unfulfilling job and a marriage that failed because of his emotional issues. Clark discovers he can walk through a wall and enter a series of infinite rooms. Obsessed with this space, he abandons the ideas of change.

The rooms create a twisted version of Clark, representing the worst parts of him, which ends up killing Clark. The film serves as a metaphor for how we can become trapped inside the false perceptions of reality. One could draw a line between the ever-warping rooms of the "Backrooms" and the way the internet is an echo chamber that twists our beliefs about the world. Peter Chidel, the director of the Cinema Arts program in Marin School of the Arts, noted the way this especially pertains to young people: "the more digital things get, the more disconnected life feels.



IMDB

Bear's dreams become nightmares in "Obsession."

And I think that that might be influencing a lot in your generation. 'Backrooms,' I was

very impressed with that, with [director Kane Parson's] approach and the movie's just sort

of sense of...these are people disconnected from their lives"

In "Obsession," Bear, a social-anxiety ridden man, wishes on a magic toy that his co-worker, Nikki, would return his affections. Chidel not that the main theme of the relationship between Bear and Nikki "really taps into a natural fear of... people's fear of love, and going too far, especially when you're young, and you haven't gone through long relationships, you just dream of what your perfect relationship is... [there's] this girl that he's obsessed with, then the flip side of that with after the wish, how obsessed she gets with him, it's just like... love taking over, and I think the helplessness that her character feels, because she's possessed resonates with a lot of people."

Bonnie Barrango (11) said, "I have a friend who feels like she's trapped and can't escape from terrible things, it's a continuous loop...A lot of young women can go through this."

Bizarre News

By Six Silva
Times staff writer

On Aug. 17, 1,602 cases of Pabst Blue Ribbon beer went missing, and the CEO is offering a \$20K reward for the roughly 40,000 pounds of alcohol, according to ABC News. The truckload was stolen from an Anheuser-Busch distribution center in Montclair, CA. The company has issued sev-

eral statements on social media to the thief (or thieves). The company's CEO, Greig DeBow, said, "To the thief—we don't fault you for wanting to brag to your friends how much PBR you have, we just wish you obtained it in an honorable way."

The company has given the thief an ultimatum requesting for the beer to be back by Sept. 9, along with a reward of up to \$5000 for any new information about the robbery. Like a

missing persons case, the longer something goes missing, the harder it can be to track down—therefore, the reward will increase to \$20,000 after Sept. 9. DeBow also said in a TikTok post, "I'm sure [the thief] look[s] cool with a garage full of PBR. That's actually not cool though. We want it back."

Some may claim they "have that dog in them." But no one truly embodies that statement quite like Calese Carron

Crowder, who was arrested on Aug. 28 in Glendale, CA, for sniffing a woman's rear end. ABC 7 reported surveillance video showing Crowder kneeling on the floor of a store and inhaling the behind of a female employee who was stocking the aisles. This, apparently, is not the first time for Crowder—he was also arrested in August of 2023 and 2025, according to Salt Lake City Weekly. What about August may prompt this

habit is unknown. Crowder had also been reported for the same offense at a nearby Marshalls. The store manager Jimmy Koh also said this was the third encounter he'd had with Crowder, who claims that he would crouch down to smell "any woman's butt." The video footage from several different stores had allowed police to identify Crowder, who is currently being held in jail without bail as he awaits a court hearing.