

# THE KNIGHT TIMES

## Wildfires Raging Through L.A. - How Were SOCES Students Affected?

By: Margaryta Miuller '25

The recent wildfires in Los Angeles, such as the Palisades, Eaton, and Hughes fires, have left a major impact on the city. These fires burned thousands of acres, destroyed homes and businesses, and forced mass evacuations. The fires are not yet 100% contained, but as the communities begin to rebuild, it's important to understand what happened and what we can do to prevent future disasters like this. Other fires included the Woodley, Sepulveda, Sunset, Archer, Hurst, Lidia, and Kenneth fires.

Strong Santa Ana Winds and dry plants caused the Palisades fire. The fire started near the Pacific Palisades and spread rapidly. According to NBC, in total, the Palisades Fire destroyed 6,837 structures. This included 5,419 homes, 135 multi-family residences, 3 mixed use buildings, 158 commercial properties, and 1,115 minor structures. The Eaton Fire, which started near Altadena, was even more devastating, destroying 9,418 structures and damaging 1,073. The Palisades and Eaton fires combined a total of over 37,000 acres, which is an area larger than all of San Francisco. Firefighters worked around the clock to contain the fires, but the extreme conditions made it a difficult battle.

As climate change worsens, wildfires in California have become even more extreme and unpredictable. The most common causes of California fires are arson and power lines, but recently according to calmatters.org, fires caused by lightning have become more common. "Scientists say to ex-



Firefighter battling the flames of the Palisades fire.

pect more lightning as the planet warms. And, aided and abetted by drought, more than 163 million trees have been killed by drought or insects". Apart from dry grasses, investigators are still looking into what really started these fires. AP News reported that exposed utility wires might have played a role in the Eaton fire. Unsurprisingly, better infrastructure upkeep is being demanded by many to prevent horrible incidents like this from happening in the future.

The wildfires left thousands of people displaced. Many lost their homes, schools,

businesses, and jobs. AP News reports these fires "have claimed the homes of numerous celebrities, including Billy Crystal, Jeff Bridges, and R&B star Jhené Aiko, and led to sweeping disruptions of entertainment events." There were serious economic and social impacts when small businesses closed in the affected areas. Whole Foods Magazine reports that in addition to the property damage, the fires affected local supply chains, which left many unemployed and communities struggling to rebuild. According to Nicholas B. Irwin, Ph.D, in Whole Foods

Magazine, "With the recent estimates, I think we are getting a clearer picture of the massive economic damages from these wildfires. It is projected to top \$50 billion in losses, which will make it the costliest wildfire in U.S. history at more than triple the losses of the 2018 Camp Fire. It may even rival the economic losses from some of the major hurricanes that have hit the U.S. in the past few decades." Although efforts to rebuild are now in progress, it will take years to take care of the long-term effects on local economies, insurance rates, and real estate markets.

Extreme weather, old infrastructure, and climate change have all contributed to these wildfires. These devastating fires serve as a reminder of the growing wildfire crisis in California. We all owe a huge thank you to the first responders, firefighters, and volunteers, who risked their lives to protect us throughout this tragedy. Despite their incredible efforts and bravery, the government needs to prioritize preventative measures like enhancing infrastructure, creating stricter and stronger fire safety laws, and funding better land management.

## SOCES SPELLING BEE

By: Lucy Loeffelholz '28

The 2025 Spelling Bee was on February 6 and it was an exciting competition to watch. After 33 full rounds of spelling, the top three were revealed to be Aurora Buckley Hymes in 3rd place, Satyajit Doshi in 2nd place, and Edita Vaisfeld in 1st place!

Congratulations to everyone involved and everyone who participated, especially to the

1st place winner Edita Vaisfeld! Edita Vaisfeld is in 7th grade and won the Spelling Bee with the word "tetragrammaton"! She now moves on to the LAUSD Bee where she will compete with more spellers on February 21st at Mulholland High School.

Edita Vaisfeld is looking forward to moving on from the Spelling Bee to the LAUSD Bee. "I'm more scared than excited, but I'm

still very excited," Edita states about her upcoming competition, "For today, I made sure not to get stressed. I studied the words I was unsure of and I made sure not to make a big deal out of it." During the Spelling Bee, she was pretty nervous, but stayed focused to keep herself in the competition. She practiced hard and will continue to practice for February 21st.

Satyajit Doshi is an 8th grader and won 2nd place in this year's Spelling Bee! To prepare for this year's Spelling Bee competition, he practiced by spelling out the words on the practice list. When asked about how he was feeling during the competition he said, "I was a little bit nervous, but I didn't think I would actually get this far." Aurora Buckley Hymes is a 7th grader who won 3rd place in the Spelling Bee! Aurora prepared for this event by practicing the



Photo of spelling bee



Photo of Spelling Bee winners

list of words with her grandma. She shared, "My grandma used to be an English teacher and I would study with her normally." Ms. Strong and the students who participated were also excited to be spelling in the new auditorium. Ms. Strong, who celebrated her 7th year running for the Spelling Bee, stated that working inside the new auditorium "was amazing and there was so much space this year!" SOCES continues to wish Edita the best as she moves on to the

LAUSD Bee. However, each of this year's participants did an amazing job. The SOCES community congratulates all of the Spelling Bee winners!

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"SOCES Personal Accounts"  
with the fires

# CAMPUS NEWS

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Lucy Loeffelholz '28

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## Letter From The Editor

Dear Reader,

I hope this letter finds you well. Enjoy reading our 2025 February Newspaper Issue! Read all about recent SOCES events like Winter Formal and the Spelling Bee while also checking out some recent World News and Sports News. In addition to reading about fashion trend predictions and Valentine's Day gift/date ideas, check page 5 to see if you received a Valentine's message!

I want to congratulate all of the writers, layout editors, photographers, photo

editors, and other contributing editors for all of their hard work on this issue. The journalism process is a very long and complicated one and it requires a team effort. Being a part of this process requires a lot of work but is also really rewarding.

With that, I want to leave you all with some great news: Our team is hard at work on another magazine issue after the success of last year's issue. This magazine issue will be centered around SOCES student life and will



feature a couple of outstanding students. And I must say, it looks amazing right now, so be on the lookout for the release!

Thanks for reading and enjoy the issue.

-Jeremy Shishkin

## Speech and Debate Class: Suspended

By: Knight Times Staff

Last semester, the SOCES Speech and Debate classroom received some very unfortunate news: LAUSD was cutting the budget from a number of programs, including theirs. The class had been newly introduced in the 2024-2025 school year, taking place afterschool, and was a lifesaver for members of the team.

Through the class, all students could attend the tournaments for free. However, without this space for students and the team, the future of Speech and Debate is uncertain.

Mr. Barasch, the Speech and Debate coach, has worked tirelessly with these students to make sure they perform at their best, and through a combined effort, the team has seen incredible results this year. They're placed 3rd overall in the league, despite having a smaller team than most.

This determined group won't let this challenge stop them, and they're already making strides in tackling it. "We've been able to work through that and solve that," Mr. Barasch says when concerning this year, "but the question is now how do we fund ourselves for next year."

Additionally, Mr. Barasch and the team have big plans for opening a Speech and Debate class during the six period day, not only for team members, but also students who want to improve their speaking and communication skills.

"Every other school in LAUSD has a Speech and Debate class," Mr. Barasch notes, "and it's what allows students to really become experts in communication." Hopefully next year, students on the team and off will be able to



Photo of Speech and Debate member

enroll in this class. It's safe to say that SOCES Speech and Debate is here to stay. With young promising members stacking up against Varsity teams, the future of Speech and Debate

is bright. Now, the only problem that remains is finding new ways to fund the program, so it can continue to be the influential organization on campus that it is.

## 8th Grade Pin & Ribbon

By: Knight Times Staff

On the morning of February 7th, the class of 2029 began their pin & ribbon ceremony in the brand-new auditorium. There was a speech from Mr. C, talking about behavior and explaining to the 2029 class on how their graduation ceremony was going to be. It started with Ms. Michel's homeroom class and ended with Mr. G's class. Finally, they moved to Glenn Hall for a feast. Before eating their breakfast, they sang for Mrs. Heck's birthday. Mrs. Heck turned "as red as her shirt," said a PTA member.

While eating their breakfasts, the next part of the event was their superlatives. From "Best Hair" to "Future

Prom Queen and King," many students won, and the roars of the crowd was a sign of support. However, many students were unfortunately absent, so some superlatives had to take photos without their duo. For example, for "Future Prom Queen and King," only Gianna Moore, Prom Queen, was there. This similarly happened to "Best Dressed," yet the crowd showed support to Khiem Lee, shouting "360!" for his outfit.

As the event neared its end, the liveliness of the students continued. They took group pictures by the backdrop as they left, while the Pilot Committee stayed behind to help clean up.



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# CAMPUS NEWS

## Cell Phone Ban Starts at SOCES

By: Valeriya Kashirskaya '28

This semester, the district decided that the cell phones were too distracting and it was time to restrict their use during school hours. At the start of this semester, the district notified the parents and students that phones would be banned throughout the school day at the beginning of Spring semester. Some believe that this will be better for the students and will make them focus more on school work rather than on their phones. Still, others believe that the idea isn't the greatest because the students won't be able to contact their families. In cases of a private emergency, students will not have easy access to their phones.

The phones will be locked away in 'Yondr' pouches, which will lock the phones into a secured bag. At the end of school, students will be able to open these pouches with a magnet called the "unlocking base."

Tyrone, SOCES security guard, shared his thoughts and his approach to this situation. "I think it's good for the students and I believe that the students will be able to focus and pay more attention to their studies. The district thinks that

the students aren't paying attention and only use their phones during class time... they are always on their phones no matter where. Bathroom, office, class, everywhere. The teachers are getting sick of it and the same goes with the district."

Tyrone finishes off by adding details on how the work might be implemented and how he personally thinks it'll work on the students. "Phones shouldn't be brought to school at all and I don't know how exactly the school will implement it, but I do know that it's going to be a rough transition. My personal opinion on this is that I know it's going to be hard for many students and they struggle a lot, but I also believe that this should work out. And for all the students that are wondering how they will contact their parents for an emergency, I'm sure that the office has already found a way to contact parents in case of any emergency".

Adding on, our Cross Country Coach Joel Valle talked about how there are pros and cons to this situation and how he believes this situation might be implemented. "The cell phone



Photo of student on their phone

ban is a good and bad choice for LAUSD students. There are pros and cons: Pros: will be that the students will not be distracted anymore and more focused in class. Cons: in case of an emergency they will not be able to contact their families immediately unless they go to the main office."

Coach Joel feels neutral about the situation. "I believe that the situation will be imple-

mented with teachers having a designated area in their classrooms where students will put their phones and return at the bell or they will not be allowed to bring them to school".

Lastly, a personal response from a student. Dahlia D. Wallace said that it would be a good thing. However, she is concerned about children with disabilities. "I think it's a good

concept, however I believe students with ISO's or 504s need to have accessibility to them in case of any emergencies or problems that they may be dealing with."

A semester later, the SOCES community still has mixed feelings about the cell phone ban. As the ban moves closer, students are all interested to see its effects, and hope they make learning better.

## Korean Students Visit SOCES

By: Knight Times Staff



Picture of Seniors posing for a photo at Luminary Lounge.

Tuesday January 21, was the second part of the Korean Student Exchange Program. Their day started at 9 a.m. in the auditorium where SOCES Cheer gave them a warm welcome with a two and a half minute cheer. Following the Cheer, Ms. Parker, Ms. Cho, Ms. Pak, and three SOCES students gave them a welcome speech. Then the Korean students had their own stage time and performed K-Pop dances, and a Traditional Korean Mask Dance. They also gave condolences and sympathies for our LA Fires. They took a group photo at center circle and then broke up into different classes.

Between 9:50-10:29 a.m. the Korean Students visited the Russian Class, Culinary Class, and Band. At these classes they gave presentations on Korean Culture, instead of receiving presentations on American culture, much like last semester.

From 10:30-11:00 a.m. they gave a tea and snack presen-

tation in the Culinary Classroom about the famous Dalgona cookies and their cultural significance in Korea.

From 11:00-11:43 a.m. they attended a presentation given by our very own, Mrs. Pak that was about SOCES. They vis-

ited the Culinary classroom and AP Physics classroom where they continued to give more presentations about Korean culture.

They also got to visit the Leadership Class where they gave a Folk Game presentation and received a leadership led activity in return. They also got to visit the Journalism Class where they gave a Gyeongbok Palace presentation on Korean architecture. Journalism taught them how to use cameras and recorded a part of SOCES this week with them as well. The Korean students had fun participating in the SOCES this week.

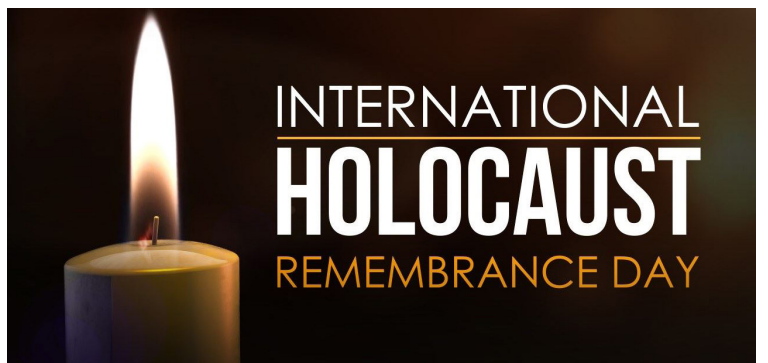
Between 11:50 and noon they said their goodbyes, took another group photo, and did a shared dance activity, then they left the school.



Picture of the senior class at Griffith Observatory for Senior Sunrise.

## HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE DAY

By: Dylan Morran '25



Yom HaShoah, more commonly known in English as Holocaust Remembrance Day, is a very special day devoted to remembering the six million innocent Jewish lives lost during one of the world's most depressing times in history. This year, our school's powerful Jewish Student Union (JSU) Club honored this holiday while also educating students through a meaningful and informative event during lunch.

On this day of remembrance, JSU held a ceremony honoring every single life lost and all those affected by beginning with a moment of silence, allowing all students to show reverence to those lost and resilience to the fighters still with us today. An informational slideshow was created, letting students and anyone who stepped in for the event learn facts about the Holocaust. They also learned about the importance of why an

event like this should be honored and never forgotten.

"We also aim to raise awareness about important historical events and combat antisemitism through education," said JSU's president, Isabella, explaining the club's commitment to bringing all students together to engage in meaningful discussions and develop a deeper understanding of history and its impact today.

JSU Club is a welcoming place for all students, Jewish and non-Jewish to unite, learn, and appreciate the significance and power of Jewish culture. The club raises awareness about Jewish history and its traditions, while also emphasizing the importance of battling through prejudice and anti-semitism. In hosting the event on this day, the JSU vowed to remember the past and promised a future of tolerance and understanding.

# POP-CULTURE



Image taken from Flickr.com

## VALENTINES GIFTS AND DATE IDEAS

By: Iliana Arriaza '25

As Valentine's Day is around the corner, stores have been flooded with gifts and candies for people to show their appreciation for others. If ever stuck with what to give a partner, then here are some thoughtful gift ideas.

Flowers are always a great option for a gift; they are beautiful and easily accessible. They are for everyone and not limited to only certain people. Simple gifts for a significant other can be chocolates or any kind of candy with flowers. It may be a simple gift but anyone would be able to appreciate it.

If on a very tight budget, an easy gift could be hand written letters and DIY items such as paper flowers, pipe cleaner flowers, or origami. Making bouquets with these materials is a great way of giving flowers that "never wilt," showing everlasting love. DIY gifts can give a sense of more commitment,

effort, and thought that's put into it. Some of the most popular gifts are Valentine's gift baskets. People often put candy, stuffed animals, or plush pictures of their significant others.

If given a high budget, perfumes and colognes can be a lovely item to put in the basket as well. Even gifting clothes like hoodies or shirts is appreciated. Other ideas could be giving matching bracelets, rings, and necklaces, which shows off who your other half is. If ever stuck without ideas, Pinterest and social media may be your best friend, amongst other tutorials that could easily make a partner happy. At the end of the day, picking the gift that suits a significant other means much more than something superficial. Love is much more powerful than money.

As for date ideas, you can never go wrong with a movie

theater date night. Some popular movies that are out right now are Heart Eyes, Love Hurts, and Companion. After the movie (or before), it would be a great idea to grab a bite of food. Restaurants like IHOP, Denny's, and The Cheesecake Factory are some great options.

If going out is not your thing, having a movie night at home with some store-bought snacks and popcorn is a great alternative.

A few more popular date ideas are big places like The Grove or The Americana. These places have a ton of activities and restaurants to choose from and even movie theaters.

Finally, another clever date idea for Valentine's Day is to go to where you had your very first date! This could be a great way to reminisce about your earlier memories in the relationship and can be very romantic.



Image taken from Etsy



Image taken from Gilbert Chocolates

## Fashion Trends Predictions for 2025

By: Mary Matevosyan '26 and Lily Sargisyan '26

Fashion in 2025 is expected to bring new styles, and creativity, with exciting trends that will change the way people dress. Many students predict that the old trends will make new and exciting comebacks.

Overalls, a once popular style, now might be seen styled in a new and modern way. Students have predicted that overalls paired with neutral colored clothing will be trending. SOCES student Sarkis Aghamalayan agreed with the predictions in the Vogue article "9 Spring 2025 Trends vogue editors" by Talia Abbas. He shared: "I think that this year will be neutral colors and also really big puffers."

Another student named Nora Militosyan predicted "I think that the new fashion trends this year would be chunky jewelry that can make a bold statement. While belts would be another way to style any outfit."

In an article from CNN-style "Fashion trend predictions for 2025" there were different ideas about upcoming fashion.



Skinny Jeans - Credit: Jeremy Moeller



Chunky Jewelry - Credit: CULT OF SUN

For example, picture-perfect pjs, bag charms, a case for suede, and finally: the return in skinny jeans. Fashion is moving in different ways and opening doors for new ideas and creativity. Currently, fashion features include animal prints, baggy clothing, casual comfort, and other popular trends.

As we look ahead to

2025, it's clear that fashion will evolve with fresh ideas, blending classic styles with other twists. Styles will be used as a way of reflecting true selves and a form of expressing emotions. These predictions show that fashion will remain a vibrant and ever changing part of culture, bringing new creativity through clothing and accessories.



Image taken from Good Housekeeping

To Eli Reisner: You are the absolute love of my life. Staring into your eyes is pure bliss. Every moment I spend with you is nothing short of lovely. I wish you the happiest of Valentines, mi amor.  
-NOT Anonymous.

*All my love goes out to the hardest working bunch of English teachers in the country! I'm grateful for all you do! — Jason*

**Hi hakob - anonymous**

(No name)- Hey Kanoa I saw u and ur looking so fine. Find out who I am <3 ;)

hiii baby!! happy valentines :)  
to: isaac wiley 9th  
from: his awesome sauce gf (valeriya k 9th)

*Dear King LeBron Raymone James, I am writing this letter to express my utmost admiration and respect for your unparalleled talent and leadership both on and off the basketball court. Your dedication to the game, work ethic, and commitment to excellence serve as an inspiration to millions of fans around the world. Your ability to elevate your teammates, make clutch plays in crucial moments, and consistently perform at the highest level is truly remarkable.*

*Your basketball IQ, versatility, and all-around skills make you one of the greatest players to ever grace the court. But it is not just your athletic prowess that sets you apart, King LeBron. Your philanthropic efforts, activism, and commitment to social justice make you a true role model and a beacon of hope for those in need. Your generosity and compassion towards others have made a positive impact on countless lives, and your dedication to giving back to your community is truly commendable.*

*In conclusion, I want to thank you for all that you have done for the game of basketball, for your community, and for being a shining example of what it means to be a true leader. Long live King LeBron James, may your reign continue to inspire and uplift all those who have the privilege of witnessing your greatness.*  
-Anonymous

**To: my beautiful and amazing girlfriend anya :)**

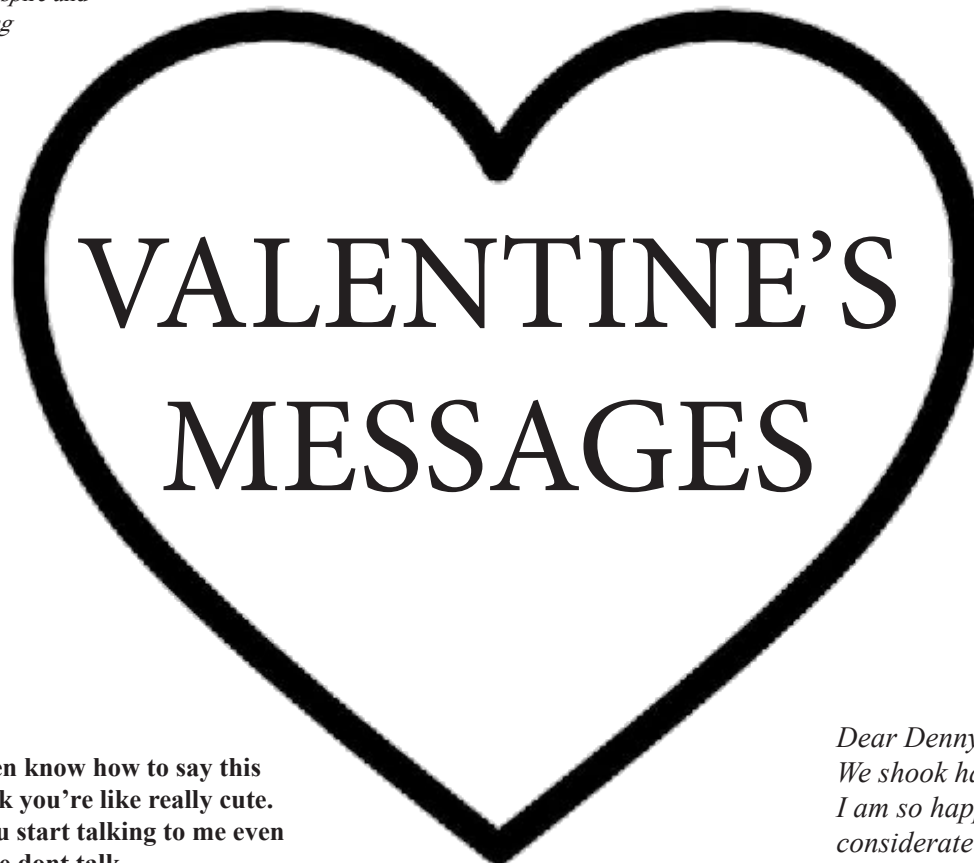
**HAPPY VALENTINES DAY! The more time I spend with you makes me realize how lucky I am to have you. You're the sweetest person i've ever met and you make me so happy.**  
- Jeremy

Afsana Anannya,  
You can be the peanut butter to my jelly  
You can be the butterflies I feel in my belly  
You can be the captain  
And I can be your first mate  
You can be the chills that I feel on our first date  
>\_<

Hi cutie happy valentines day!!!  
ILYSMM, our 1st of many VALENTINES togetherrr, can't wait to spend it with youu.  
To: Maleah Guillen  
From: Matthew Arce

Cavt tanem aziz jan (to jassy ani soph and kiso) - angelina

**Adid Mahmood, can you please help me study for FLOCAB**  
-Anonymous



Hii cutie happy valentines dayyy!!!  
ILYSMM hope you have a great dayy, first of many valentines, soo excited to spend the dayy with youu, my cute, beautiful, pretty, gorgeous, amazing, smart, funny, silly, and kind Girl-frienddd, Soo lets make our valentines day special and a day to remember forever, my first ever valentines, and my only valentines forevrrr, your favorite person everrr, best friend, your forever valentines, your forever secret admirer your M&M. ILYSMM forevrrrr  
From: Anonymous personn  
To: Maleah Guillen

to: my super sweet and handsome bf matthew

happy valentines dayy, thank you for these past months where you have made me feel so happy and loved. im so proud of all the things you have accomplished and just know that i love you forever and everr

love, your m&m

Alina H, I think you are really pretty -J

**to G.A,  
i dont even know how to say this but i think you're like really cute. i hope you start talking to me even though we dont talk,  
apiwhhsl  
yours truly,  
anonymous**

dear savanna l, i love you sososooso-sosososososososooooo much and you're the most sweetest most funniest most chillest most coolest gal ive ever met in this whooooooeeeeee world -from your girlfriend

Mr. Pak,  
Its me, Taylor Swift, confessing my love for you. I can't hold it in anymore. Please call me back!

*Dear Denny's,  
We shook hands exactly 3 months ago and I am so happy we did. You are the MOST considerate and loving and sweet boyfriend a girl can ask for. You are kind and patient, willing to walk with me through fire just to make sure I come out safe. I'm not really great with words sometimes so before I go off into a spiel just know, I am so grateful you're mine. I love you.  
Love Wendy's <3*

*(anonymous)Hiiiiii miguel. I kinda like you. Find out who i am baby.*

Dylan Morran, please go to the gym with me

**hey samhita amit told me u like me and um I think ur kinda cute um I'll see u on valentines-anonymous**

*As I awaken from my slumber, I rub my eyes, and there he is next to me. My king, LeBron James. Not actually though, just a life-size body pillow measuring six feet nine inches and weighing 250 pounds.*

*I give him one last kiss before I get up and begin my routine. To start, I do what every person should do and I make my bed. Both pillows are stamped with different photos of my king, along with my sheets and comforter.*

*I push aside the LeBron shower curtain and hop in. I quickly apply my LeBron scented soap and get out. I brush my teeth with my LeBron toothbrush while listening to his career highlights to keep my brain busy. After I finish my routine, I choose a jersey from my collection, and I make sure everything is where it needs to be before I set out for the day. LeBron posters? Check. LeBron shrine? Check. LeBron Space Jam: A New Legacy squishy stretch toy? Check. Everything is good, now I can leave.*

*I pour a bowl of milk and dump in my space jam cereal to relieve my hunger and I continue listening to LeBron's highlights. I take my time with my cereal, enjoying every bite, as the highlight reel comes to an end. That is my queue to go sit on the couch, and watch Space Jam on repeat for the rest of the day. Most days, I don't even leave the house. There's no need. Everything I need, I already have.*

*LeBron Raymone James if you're reading this, thank you for everything.*

Hey Sophia Y I have liked u for a while now and I know u like me too um yea -secret admirer

(Anonymous)- Hey Jalal you looking so cute today.

**Kaylee Sanchez please marry me.**

***Dearest Antonio Roberto Altamirano ever since i first laid eyes on you ive made it my mission to make you my pookie (like the talk tuah podcast). And after countless sleepless nights of watching you sleep i feel its finally time to confess my love for you and gauge your response. Negative or positive you will be mine, oneway or another. Choose wisely.***

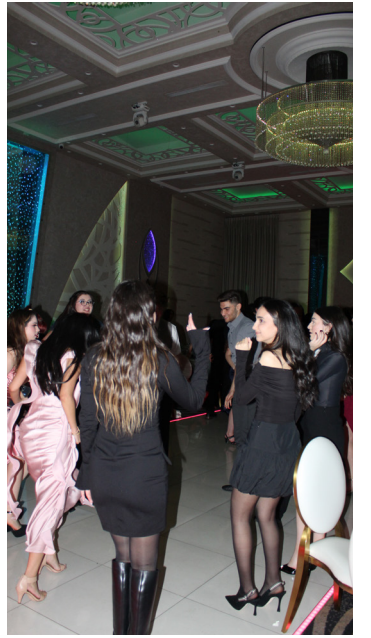
Dear Saoirse,  
Thank you for being our favorite Irish girl! We love you and are so proud of all of your accomplishments.  
Love,  
J and Z

I miss the Whimsical Lore Chatroom.

**Rowan from 10th is soo cool**  
-Anonymous

# CAMPUS NEWS

## Winter Formal: A Winter Wonderland



By: Barbara Garcia '25

On January 31st, SOCES gathered for a night to remember at the highly anticipated Winter Formal. This event was held at the Olympia Banquet Hall, and it was filled with many good vibes, lots of great outfits and great music.

The evening started at 6:30pm with students being greeted by staff to get checked before going inside the venue. It was a beautiful venue, filled with many lights, glimmering chandeliers overhead and cute winter wonderland decorations added by ASB, staff, and volunteers. The food and the service was really good. The waiters did a fantastic job with their work. It

was a great service overall and all students thought the food was very delicious. In addition to delicious appetizers, a couple of main items were roasted chicken and spaghetti noodles.

The music provided by the Dj set the mood for the night. He played a mix of spanish and english songs and classic hits which many students said was a great mix. The energy in the room was there; everyone gathered up on the dance floor and danced along to the music. Many students took the opportunity to show off their moves while others enjoyed talking with friends, and taking pictures in the photo booth.

A student who went says, "It was a great opportunity to dress up nice and enjoy a day with their friends and their date outside of a regular school day." The highlight of the day was the crowning of the winter formal court. After a competitive vote, Kayla Chavez and Liam were announced as the winter formal king and queen. The crowning was followed with a slow dance which later all the couples joined the dance floor.

Winter formal was a night of excitement! The formal provided a much needed break, allowing students to celebrate with friends and create long lasting memories and enjoy each

other's company, reflecting on the ones that make highschool so special and unforgettable. As the night came to a close, students left with big smiles on their faces. The success of this year's Winter Formal was all thanks to ASB, our principal, and all our staff who volunteered to help make this happen and help bring this all together. As the final song played and the lights went back on, students left with excitement, looking forward to the next big event on the school calendar. The 2025 Winter Formal may be over, but the memories will last a lifetime.



## JANUARY 31st PEP RALLY

By: Siena O'Rourke '26

The winter spirit week was wrapped up with a big boom on Friday, ending with the pep rally during period 4. Most highschool students met up at the small gym to celebrate the end of winter sports. The pep rally featured girls and boys soccer, along with girls and boys basketball, and included special performances from the cheer and dance teams.

With the theme for this Friday being Dress to Impress: Knights Gone Wild, leadership handed out spirit sticks full of candy along with hosting interactive crowd games. Leadership made sure to incorporate all aspects of the student body with sports teams battling in games like basketball musical chairs, tug of war, and squid game dalgona. The rest of the

crowd participated in games of hungry hungry hippo and guess who.

Also, the event included a secret winter formal proposal when Anya Vaiman was asked by her boyfriend Jeremy Shishkin.

Anya was tricked by ASB and SOCES media into thinking she would be playing a game. Her eyes were closed when, all of a sudden, the song "Lovers Rock" by Tv Girl started playing. Once she opened her eyes, she saw her friends holding up posters that spelled out "Formal?" The crowd went wild with cheers while she said yes and received flowers and balloons. Baseball and soccer player Nikola Petrinac witnessed the proposal and thought it was "very cutesy."



Photo of Seniors at the Pep Rally



Photo of the tug of war competition

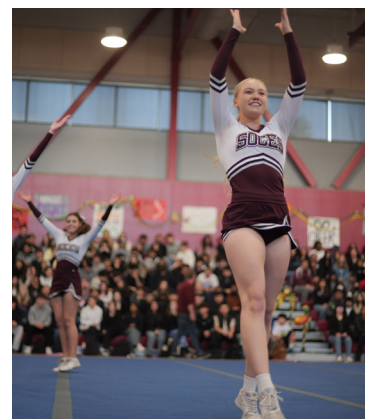


Photo of the cheer performance



Photo of the SOCES Dance Production



Photo of the Winter Formal Proposal

## Fire Relief Efforts at SOCES: How can you Help?

By: Nora Militosyan '26

SOCES, located in Reseda, has been cautious in preparing for fire related emergencies. The school has done fire drills to practice safety protocols and evacuation procedures. This involves all on campus including the students and staff evacuating to the P.E. Field, making sure of readiness for actual emergencies.

While SOCES did not directly get damaged from the recent L.A. Wildfires, the community nearby faced many challenges. The fires caused destruction, with many families experiencing loss and displacement of houses, and personal

items. The SOCES community has been actively involved in supporting families that have unfortunately been affected, providing resources. Sydney Devore, a student attending Sherman Oaks Center for Enriched Studies, has co-created a Denim Drive with Reyn Campbell. The Denim Drive is non profit organization run by high school students in the San Fernando valley. They host clothes drives, but the main focus is on denim. Donate to your community at [www.denimdrive.org](http://www.denimdrive.org) or On instagram @denimdrive2025 for more updates.



Denim Drive Logo



# WORLD NEWS

## TRUMP INAUGURATION

By: Melly Galstyan '28

Inauguration Day occurred on the 20th of January, and happens every 4 years to swear in a new president. During this Inauguration Day, the current president, Donald J. Trump, and the vice president, J.D. Vance, were sworn in and took office. But, what were the expectations for inauguration day? How will people feel about the Biden-Trump transition?

There were several former presidents, members of Trump's family, and high-level executives that attended the ceremony. Even Biden attended, though Trump did not attend Biden's inauguration in 2021. This ceremony took place in the Capitol rotunda. It was originally supposed to be held outdoors, but due to cold weather conditions, it was moved inside.

President Donald J. Trump headed out on Monday morning to the White House for a conventional tea with the Bidens. During the ceremony, the current president delivered an inaugural address. In Trump's inaugural address, he stated that the theme would be "unity, strength, and even fairness." Trump also stated in his inaugural speech how "we went through hell for four years with these people. And so, you know, something has to be done about it."



Photograph taken from reuters.com

Trump had made a series of promises on what he would do on day one on the campaign trail. He had decided to start with a mass deportation program and pardoning January 6th rioters.

Aside from this inauguration, Americans had mixed opinions about the Biden-Trump transition. By looking at a poll conducted on January 2nd - 15th, 2025, 49% of Americans approve of the way he is handling the presidential transition, 44% of Americans disapprove, and 7% of Americans express no opinion.

At the end of Trump's first term, he and his team had delayed the transition process for months. He refused to sign agreements, which allowed the presidential candidates to use federal real estate, IT (information technology) and election winners to deploy staff agencies. Trump has still not signed the former agreement, and has only signed the latter many weeks after the election.

Now that Trump is in office, we all look forward to see life in America in Trump's second term.

## ICE Raids and February 3rd Protest

By: Janelle Rosales '26

Donald Trump has returned as president of the United States, and he is not wasting any time fulfilling the promises he has made to the American people. Following his inauguration on January 20, 2025, the second term president has been issuing executive orders left and right. One of the biggest issues that Trump seemed to address throughout his campaign has been the mass deportation of millions of immigrants. During this time, not only have federal troops been sent to the Southern border, but military aircrafts are now being used to deport immigrants.

The president is currently collaborating with the rest of his administration to formulate the beginning of the deportation orders he had promised. If successful, this plan will speed up deportations and encourage an increase in detention centers.

Raids conducted by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (otherwise known as ICE) have been occurring throughout the country. Major cities such as Chicago, Denver, Los Angeles, New York, and Washington D.C. will be the first to anticipate large-scale raids in immigrant communities.

There have been an increasing number of ICE officers being sent to these immigrant dense cities. In addition, the De-

partment of Homeland Security has made a statement sharing how the policy that once prevented ICE officers from arresting undocumented immigrants in sensitive areas (churches, schools, hospitals, etc.) will be coming to an abrupt end.

According to the Los Angeles Times, the recent rumors about ICE raids taking place during the ongoing Pacific Palisades fires appeared to be false. The Department of Homeland security announced that no large-scale raids had been scheduled for that time. Moreover, "the federal agency said it does not conduct immigration enforcement activities during major emergencies" (Los Angeles Times). However, ICE has not shied from conducting raids in other parts of the nation.

Chicago was one of ICE's primary targets as the federal agency was roaming all over the city. On Sunday, January 26, over half a dozen ICE sightings occurred throughout the day.

With two members of Trump's administration being present in Chicago (including Tom Homan, Trump's appointed "border czar") arrests were inevitable. Homan stated in multiple cases that "Chicago [would be] ground zero for mass deportations" (Chicago Tribune).

ICE destroyed communities as family members,

friends, and neighbors were arrested throughout the day. One Chicago native shared with the Chicago Tribune "They took our neighbor's dad [...] My parents were crying. We are terrified."

**What to do if ICE goes to your home:**

With ICE raids spreading throughout the nation it is imperative that undocumented immigrants remember their rights. If ICE comes to your home it is illegal for them to enter your property without a legal search warrant. Arrest warrants or administrative warrants are not enough to let them enter your home. Do not open the door or let any officers enter unless you see proof of a warrant. If a warrant is shown, check the signature line located at the top to make sure it was signed by a judge.

In the chance that the officers do enter your home, do not physically resist them. At this point, the only thing recommended is to inform them that you do not consent to their entry. Refuse to sign any documents and always ask for an attorney.

If possible, try to document what happened. Taking pictures, videos, or even writing down what happened can be very useful to your case. Furthermore, writing down badge numbers and mentioning whether the officers interfered with your documentation could be a huge help. It is also vital to inform officers if you are a minor.

Lastly, report any raids or checkpoints sighted in your area. To report any ICE sightings in Los Angeles call (888)624-4752.

## TikTok Ban: Problems With TikTok and our Generation

By: Stefan Amirkhanyan '26

On January 19th, the world famous entertainment application, TikTok was banned from being used in the United States for about 14 hours. The ban was enacted by the Supreme Court but was temporarily lifted by President Donald Trump's executive order. The cause of the ban was the government's concern about TikTok's ties to the Chinese government. They were worried about them stealing information from our devices. Many students here at SOCES had very mixed opinions about the TikTok ban. Some students would like for it to be banned since it may cause lack of focus in their studies.

SOCES Senior, Mary Matevosyan said "I use TikTok daily and if I'm being completely honest, I think it would be very beneficial if it were to get banned permanently. Instead of sitting around scrolling, I would have more time to do homework and study for my tests." As you can see, some students think that TikTok is a distraction to students.

Others argue that TikTok is a great community

where people can be open and show their opinions on topics. 11th grader Liam Clinger said, "For me, TikTok wasn't really a distraction, it was more of a place where I can talk to others and build a community where I felt welcomed."

Another reason for the TikTok ban was because of the released dopamine that we get from liking, commenting, and sharing videos that cause us to become addicted.

SOCES English Teacher Ms. Rose said, "I think it's annoying when students use phones in general but not specifically TikTok. A lot of kids don't use it because it's hard to use in class." She says rarely sees students use TikTok in class.

While Ms. Rose might give students the benefit of the doubt, other Teachers such as Ms. Brard think otherwise: "TikTok is horrible for our students and the reasoning behind it is because its harming our students' attention spans." The TikTok ban comes to show that the addiction to our phones and social media is becoming worse and is causing students to become addicted.

## OPED: Why Black History Month is so Important

By: Knight Times Staff

In 1976, President Gerald Ford officially declared February as Black History Month and since then hundreds of millions of Americans have recognized the contributions of Black Americans in all fields, from historic figures to athletes to entertainers.

Dedicating February to the contributions of Black Americans was needed as their contributions were often overlooked in history books and the media.

However, there have been many who have questioned the need for a Black History Month in 2025.

The answer is simple. We still need Black History Month because racism still exists in 2025. Intolerance still exists. Hate still exists. And in 2025 racists have stepped out of the shadows and now publicly display their prejudice with pride.

Acts of discrimination extend past the lines of color. Antisemitism has made recent headlines since the recent Gaza conflict with college students openly protesting Israel. Last week Nazis marched in Cincinnati. Asian hate crimes became too common during the Covid pandemic with Asian Americans getting assaulted in public. According to NPR, over 9000 Anti-Asian incidents have taken place in the United States since the pandemic.

The country's new administration has already taken action against the LGBTQ+ community. One of President Trump's first executive actions targeted this community by taking away freedoms such as bathroom usage and access to sports and medical treatments.

The new administration has also been targeting immigrants with ICE raids causing great fear in not just Latino communities but in all minority groups. In fact, President Trump attempted to end birthright citizenships on his first day in office, a right guaranteed by the 14th Amendment.

On January 22, two days after his inauguration, President Trump signed another executive action ending DEI (diversity, equity, and inclusion programs). He called it an action that will protect civil liberties and stop radical acts. The intention of DEI was to promote fairness and full participation for all people and to address discrimination in the workplace. DEI has since been turned into racist attacks towards minority employees inferring that they were only hired for their skin color. President Trump even blamed the recent deadly plane crash in Washington DC on a DEI hire without any evidence to support the opinion.

It has been five years since George Floyd was murdered. Since that time the term "Black Lives Matter" has been attacked as being racist. The #MeToo movement has been characterized as sexist towards men. The concept of being "woke" has been painted as a radical left wing movement attacking common sense everyday Americans.

This week the Google calendar has removed Pride Month, Holocaust Remembrance Day, and Black History Month from its calendar.

In 2021, Texas banned the teaching of slavery in U.S. history classes.

This is the evidence, and it shows one thing: We are not ready to close the book on racism, prejudice, and discrimination.

These acts not only still happen, they are being perpetrated by our own government, the people meant to protect the people, and the companies we work for. As a country we have made giant strides with fighting prejudice, but we're not ready. We are not ready for a country that should open its arms to all colors, creeds, and genders when instead, it raises its fists at so many. There is too much work to do.

It's 2025 and Black History Month is more important than ever.

## Superbowl Theories and how the Eagles Took Home the Winning Title

By: Kerolos Boktor '25

The long anticipated Super Bowl LIX took place on February 9, 2025 at Caesars Superdome in New Orleans. On this day, the Philadelphia Eagles redeemed themselves after their devastating three-point loss against the Kansas City Chiefs in 2023 with an eighteen-point win resulting in a 40 to 22 point score.

When Chemistry teacher Mr. Garcia was asked who he thought would win the Super Bowl, he took the rumored approach within his response. He said that the NFL follows a script and stated "Have you seen the color theory? The color that's usually at the bottom wins the Super Bowl. So I think that the Eagles will win." He added, "The theory has been right six times in a row."

Interestingly enough, Mr. Garcia was right this year. The Superbowl color theory

has been a thing since Super Bowl LVI, when the orange and yellow hues on the logo reflected the Bengals and Rams. The year after, the logo's red and green tones perfectly reflected the results of the Eagles vs. the Chiefs. Because this theory has been correct for so many years in a row, many are speculating that the superbowl is scripted.

Now, when it came to determining who will be the winner of this year's Super Bowl, Sports analysts were predicting the Kansas City Chiefs lead by Patrick Mahomes are likely to take home the title and be the first ever team to win three Super Bowls in a row due to their unmatched offense within the league. Although, the Eagles had shut that down with their incredible defense and offense making them possibly one of the most complete teams in the NFL



Credit to Gregory Shamus/Getty Images.

at the moment.

The New York Times had marked the Chiefs as the slight favorites to win and concluded that it will likely be a close game and the new Eagles running back Saquon Barkley may change the course of the game leading to an Eagles win. Although the New York Times were wrong about the game being close, they were right about Saquon Barkley changing

the course of the game. Despite Barkley running 97-yards total during the whole game and making no touchdowns, he was still able to scare the Chiefs' defense into targeting Barkley leaving open spaces for his teammates and allowing Jaylen Hurts to make complete passes to the poorly guarded players.

For all those half-time show fanatics, this year the NFL showcased Kendrick Lamar and

SZA as the performers during half-time! This performance will definitely be remembered for years to come due to Kendrick's keen lyrics and SZA's vocals. They performed "Squabble Up," "Humble," "DNA," "Euphoria," "Man at the Garden," "Peekaboo," "Luther," "All The Stars," "Not Like Us," and "TV Off." It will be hard to try to top this electrifying performance next year.

## NBA TRADES LUKA DONCIC FOR ANTHONY DAVIS

By: Kerolos Boktor '25

On February 2nd, 2025, all NBA fans were sent into shockwaves when ESPN announced that the Mavericks had traded their number one player, Luka Doncic, to the Lakers for Anthony Davis, after he had carried them to the Championships just the season before.

The most shocking part about this trade was that the Mavericks' General Manager, Nico Harrison, didn't have the courtesy to make Luka aware that he was in talks with the Lakers about a possible trade during January 2025. The most disappointing part was that Luka had purchased a 15 Million dollar home in Dallas just one week before he had been traded. Anthony Davis, like Doncic, was also unaware of talks about a trade. However, he was very understanding about being traded to the Mavericks and had promised to give the Mavericks his all.

ESPN stated that "The Mavericks were motivated to move Doncic because of his constant conditioning concerns, sources told ESPN Official MacMahon. There had been significant frustration within the organization about Doncic's lack of discipline regarding his diet and conditioning, which team sources considered a major factor in his injury issues". Although many people had caught on to the fact that Doncic was promised a Supermax deal, which would allow him to make almost 100 Million dollars more

and given the Mavericks' financial position they would simply not be able to afford Luka. For the meantime the complete reason on why Luka was traded is unknown, but it's likely a combination of the two.

When 12th grader Patric Boules was asked about his thoughts on the Luka Doncic trade, he stated "The trade was so bad that even 2K didn't let me do it. The Lakers traded away their best defensive player for a guard known for scoring without playing defense. However the Lakers now have an amazing offensive power but lack in defense until they get Mark Williams." He ended off saying that "so far the Mavs definitely won this trade." 11th grader Garret Arch had given a similar response to Patric's when he stated that "The Mavericks won the trade despite what most people think seeing the numbers that AD had put up on February 8th and that both players are very prone to injuries. But Luka won't play any defense".

What is certain at the moment is that the Lakers are definitely trying to rebuild, given the fact that LeBron plans on retiring by next year. This rebuild will be very interesting to watch and it's definitely expected that the Lakers will trade off older players for younger players in their trades to come. Additionally for all you NBA fans, get ready to watch the game on February 25th where the Lakers will face the Mavericks.

## SOCES Winter Sports Come to an End

By: Sona Karapetyan '26

With a focus on year-round practice and competitive competition, the boys basketball team has had a challenging winter season. To enhance their abilities and get ready for the difficult games they play, the team practices daily and plays tough competition. They've had an outstanding 14-5 record so far. Knowing that every game is a chance to improve, the team is prepared for the challenge.

The team is aiming to place in the top 10 in its division and is working on improving certain talents under Coach Crockett's direction. In an interview with one of the greatest players, 11th grader Owen Holitzman stated, "Our team has been putting in the work every day, and this season is one to watch." They're using weight training and intense practice sessions to increase their strength and endurance in addition to their basketball talents.

Coach Crockett encourages that everyone who has the motivation to play basketball can become better with her guidance.

Girls Basketball is also coming to an end! With new and old players, the girls basketball team strives to win every game they play. There is a strong sense of teamwork and new excitement in the air with new transfers on both teams.

The boys and girls basketball teams are one of the most competitive teams at the school because of their dedication: they never stop pushing themselves to play at their best.

The boys soccer team has also committed to daily



Boys Soccer team walks in pride after winning a home game.

practice in facing a tough winter season. To make sure they were prepared for the competition, the players have been practicing ball handling, speed, and teamwork. They were dedicated to having a good season and challenged themselves to play better with every practice.

Ruben Vermishyan, a 9th grader, is one of the most notable players this year. His commitment and talent on the field have been leaving a lasting impression. When talking to Ruben, he said, "Every practice is a chance to improve and work harder for the team. We're all pushing ourselves to be the best we can be this season."

Girls Soccer also began their season with an amazing start. With Coach Mike and Coach Joel, They played Hollywood and won 4-1! Wish them a good end to a great season!

Overall, with facing upcoming games, the teams have developed a close relationship,

encouraging and supporting one another both on and off the field. The soccer teams are prepared to face any obstacle this season because of their resilience and commitment.

Additionally, every game has been infused with excitement and school pride thanks to the efforts of the girls cheer team. Their routines and cheers are perfected through rehearsal and dedication to keep the audience inspired and the school spirit intact. Due to their passion and teamwork, SOCES Cheer is a vital component of any sporting event.

Angela Acosta, the team captain, inspires and motivates the team with her passionate leadership. "We bring the energy and keep the crowd hyped—it's what makes cheering so special," she says. Whether on campus or on the sidelines, the team is always ready to inspire and represent our school.