

CENTURION

SPOTLIGHT

VOLUME XXII, ISSUE 2 // CYPRESS HIGH SCHOOL // NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2021

9801 VALLEY VIEW ST, CYPRESS, CA 90630



Winter Break

See Front Page, page 1 and 2

CHS' athletic fields aren't up to par and see what the Centurions are up to during the holiday!



@cypressjournalism



@cyphype



@cypresscenturionspotlight



cyphype.com

CENTURIONS' WINTER PLANS

BY TALANIA WILSON



Charniece Walker, a sophomore at CHS is going to Las Vegas to see her family and friends and look for a house. Some of her favorite things about the holidays are eating food, getting gifts, and spending quality time with her family, and not going to school.



Carlos Garcia, CHS security, said that he is looking forward to relaxing with family as well as getting more sleep. One of his favorite things about the holidays is going to his grandma's house with all of his family. He is looking forward to being with family and watching Christmas movies.



Tasneem Nakhal, a freshman, is excited about winter break because her birthday is coming up and she is going to Las Vegas, and she is looking forward to eating good food.



Angelica Estrada, a Cypress Instructional Aide, is looking forward to spending time with family and eating good food. She plans on cleaning and shopping during Christmas break. One of her favorite thing about the holidays is spending time with loved ones.

CHS ATHLETIC FIELDS

BY TALANIA WILSON



The Cypress High athletics fields aren't in the best conditions. There is grass in the wrong places, and the grass that should be there is lumpy, so the fields get too muddy from all the exposed dirt.

Softball coach Kevin Dull said, "The field "needs to be improved. What needs to be improved is the overall conditions of the field like the grass and the dirt. Grass needs to be fertilized better. When the field is overused you get a compaction problem, which leads to the roots getting strangled and the grass dying. Not only that, if you don't fertilize it the grass isn't strong enough to fight off the weeds, then it starts to die."

The bad field conditions can affect athletes and the way they play. James Quiron the band director said, "It's frustrating and difficult to practice on the fields because the clumps and hills can cause injuries. Sometimes it's wet where they practice, because of the antiquated irrigation infrastructure, which isn't the best because there are only two irrigation technicians for the entire district of 21 schools."

John Weber, the baseball coach, said at the moment his field is in disarray because it is getting renovated over Thanksgiving break. His field renovations consist of aerating it, defatching it, and overseeding it in order to put new grass over it. This is important to do because over time when you're running and running on a field the soil gets compacted, causing a compaction problem. Coach Weber says the Anaheim Union High School District does not give anything to the head coaches to fix their fields. But over the last few years the district has hired Zohra Cronin, Director of Maintenance and Operations and Juliann Ferguson, Energy manager, who oversees the irrigation technicians, and everything to do with the grass. Since they have been hired, Weber has been able to get fertilizer from them. Since they have been hired they have been trying to make our fields better. Desare Burdick, the Operations Supervisor, says up until 2020 the district had little support regarding the athletics fields. But Cronin and Ferguson have started to view athletics fields as outdoor classrooms, and have been supporting the athletics field as much as possible, supplying seed, topsoil, fertilizer, and equipment as needed, for example.

Sports are not just about having fun, because they build discipline, compassion, communication, critical thinking, and you make friends. But sports in schools are not treated as well as the classrooms. Cypress High School loses students because of our terrible fields, because other districts have better athletic programs. A new field will be very beneficial to the coaches, students, and the school.

Centurions Find Parking Lot Conditions Challenging

WRITTEN BY RUBY MILBURN

Many of the students at Cypress High drive to school every day, along with teachers and other staff members. Thus, there is a lot of activity in the parking lot. In the mornings, a security guard is usually monitoring drivers and pedestrians to make sure students get to class safely and on time. However, after school there's not always someone regulating the parking lot, although **Mr. Pfeiffer** goes out when possible, leaving students to struggle as they try to get across the street and out of the lot.

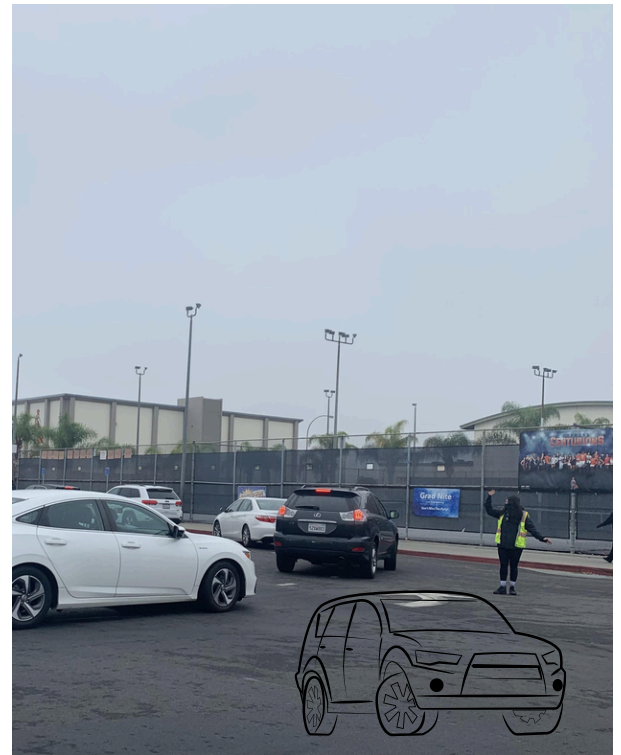
So what's the reason for all the traffic? In reality, many adults make the parking lot experience more difficult than the students. Parents park in areas which are meant for driving, to wait for their children, causing more traffic. Adults also accelerate through intersections without looking, forcing pedestrians to be on higher alert than usual as they try not to get hit. Additionally, students and pedestrians cross the parking lot diagonally rather than using crosswalks, getting in the way of cars trying to drive out.

One of the school's security guards, **Marilynn Ramirez**, also voiced her concern for the students' and drivers' safety regarding kids crossing the street. Ramirez stated, "students need to make sure they are using the crosswalk," because many do not pay attention while crossing the street which becomes a big problem. Proper use of the crosswalks after school will ensure the safety of both students and drivers in the parking lot.

In an interview with principal **Dr. Kevin Hodgson**, he commented that the school has been considering closing one of the gates after school so people can only exit through the main exit which will eliminate traffic jams. Students have voiced that this would be a beneficial change for the parking lot, as it will prevent traffic jams. This decision was recommended to the school by the city, who oversees traffic signals, including the one outside the school parking lot. Although Hodgson wasn't at the school before the new traffic signal was implemented, he's heard great things about the addition of the traffic signal, and drivers feel like it was a helpful incorporation to the school.

According to Hodgson, the school does its best to have an adult in the parking lot as much as possible, but security is not always available due to other needs. Having a security guard is something that student drivers have also expressed would be helpful in keeping a better flow of traffic. Student drivers would love to see a traffic monitor after school, such as senior **Michael Natale** who said, "there should be someone out there directing [traffic] because the flow is very unorganized."

As the school year progresses and more students begin getting their licenses, the parking lot will continue to fill up. However students and staff are doing their best to keep the lot running as safely and efficiently as possible.



Campus security guard Marilynn Ramirez directs traffic while trying to get students to class on time.

BTS IS BACK IN LA

WRITTEN BY: DEBORAH SON



BTS fans flocked to SoFi Stadium to see their favorites after a long Covid driven dry spell.

Photo Credit: Erin Baek

Bangtan Sonyeondan, worldwide known as BTS, is back in Los Angeles with their new record-breaking songs. In 2021, the fandom called Army was able to attend their first in-person concert since the pandemic. The four-day concert took place at SoFi Stadium from November 27, 2021, to December 2, 2021, at 7:30 pm. All the 200,000 concert tickets were sold out in a matter of seconds, making BTS the first artists to sell out all four concerts at SoFi Stadium. Because the tickets were sold out so fast, some fans say that the tickets were sold out even before being released to the public, even with a 70,000 capacity.

Erin Baek, a freshman at Cypress High School who attended the concert said, "I felt inspired because I know that Kpop is something really hard to succeed in but they did it. I also liked how wholesome people were, standing up for each other in the lines."

The seven superstars in BTS are RM (Kim Namjoon) being the leader, Jin (Kim Seokjin), SUGA (Min Yoongi), J-Hope (Jung Hoseok), Jimin (Park Jimin), V (Kim Taehyung), and Jeongguk (Jeon Jungkook), who first made their debut on June 12, 2013. According to the LA Times, there are "over 40.8 million Armys all over the world" supporting BTS. Their most recent song that was ranked #1 on billboards was "Permission to Dance," which captured many hearts, following "Butter" and "Dynamite." One of the highlights from the concert was that three fans dressed up in LED costumes to get BTS's attention from the large crowd. The trio of blue, yellow, and red, lit up the whole stadium. During the concert, Megan Thee Stallion made a special appearance for the song, "Butter." As Army sang along with BTS, the changing colors from the lightsticks made the night special. "Borahae Army!"

Summer Walker Releases New Album 'Still Over It'

WRITTEN BY JAKE HARRIS

On November 5, Summer Walker released her highly anticipated sophomore album 'Still Over It,' which broke many records on Apple Music and the Billboard music charts. The album debuted at the top of the Billboard 200 chart, making it her first No.1 album earning over 166,000 equivalent album units and the first No.1 R&B album by a woman in over five years. Walker's prequel to this album, 'Over It,' was released over two years ago peaking at number two on the Billboard 200 chart, and has since been certified platinum by the RIAA. This new album is already showing to be more successful than her previous one as it has broken many records such as it being the biggest 24 hour debut on Apple Music by a female artist and the biggest debut for an R&B album ever. Walker also joins Taylor Swift as the only female artist to have 18 songs chart simultaneously on the Billboard Hot 100, with the song 'No Love' featuring SZA charting the highest at No. 13. Additionally, across all streaming platforms 'Still Over It' accumulated 201.1 million on demand streams, breaking Walker's own previous record for the largest streaming week ever for an R&B album by a woman.

Walker released 'Ex for a Reason' as the lead single from the album with JT from City Girls on October 14, which was different from many of her previous songs as it was more upbeat. Walker then teased her fans on October 18 by putting hard drives with the album on it in a glass box, challenging her fans to break it open to listen to the new album. She did this in several cities with the first one being in New York, where one fan actually broke the box and got the hard drive. Fans on twitter praised Walker for her creative promotion describing her as innovative.



Summer Walker's 'Still Over It' is climbing up the charts! (photo from Pitchfork.com)



Summer Walker teases her fans with a hard drive containing her album in a glass box (photo from portalrap mais.com)

Senior Eunice Kim has 'Still Over It' on repeat saying, "I love this new album so much, my favorite songs are 'Session 33' and 'Throw It Away!'"

Walker's fanbase has grown tremendously thanks to this new album and the future seems bright for her career as the album is showing to be one of the most successful of 2021.

Boys Varsity Soccer Kick-Off the Season

WRITTEN BY: YE JI JONG



Cypress High School's Varsity Boys Soccer team is slowly kicking off the season with warm-ups and practices after school. After an entire year of quarantine and online school, the team is itching to get back on the field and compete!

Coach Mora has high expectations and hopes for this season.

"I have high expectations every year. But this year, we have a good number of scholar athletes, so I think this season will be pretty good. Covid drastically impacted the team since athletes weren't as motivated nor were they exercising on the day to day, so they lacked condition and ability to move in the field," he stated.

This year, star players include Senior **Rafay Shafique**, Senior **Brandon Ramos**, Senior **Darwin Guzman**, and Senior **Cole Kim**. The coach noted that they had drastically improved from last year regarding maturity and IQ sense on the field.

Captains Rafay Shafique and Brandon Ramos also had high expectations for the season.

"I want to have fun for my last year. I've been playing all three years so I want to have a good bond with the team. This year, I want us to be more locked in. We were off focus due to Covid, but this season we have more motivation and time to focus on school," stated Shafique.

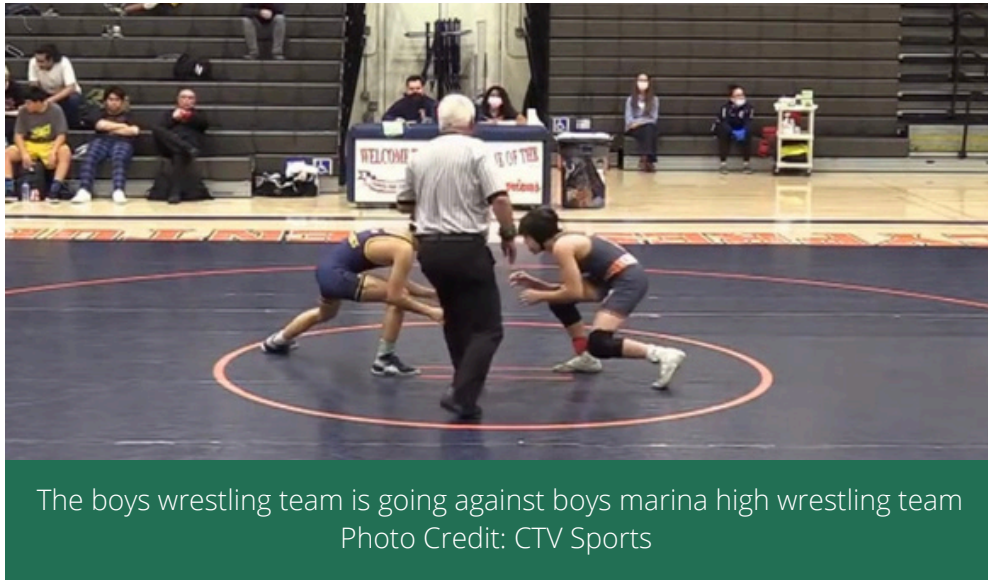
"I want us to make CIF. Last year we didn't make it so I want us to have a future this year," said Ramos.

While the captains had strong hopes for the future, the rest of the team also felt the same. Seasoned varsity member Darwin Guzman stated that, "the best part of playing soccer at Cypress is the brotherhood and how everyone's connected. It's more than friends and teammates. We're family."

As a last word of advice, Coach Mora advises the team to "not forget class, because school is always first. No school means no opportunity to play so work and play like it's the last game."

Wrestling Ready to Rumble!!!

WRITTEN BY: ANISH ASHOKKUMAR



The boys wrestling team is going against boys marina high wrestling team
Photo Credit: CTV Sports

The boys and girls wrestling teams have been changing over the years but one thing that has not changed is Mr. Lundberg, who has been coaching wrestling for 30 years.

Mr. Lundberg enjoys teaching wrestling and says that it improves the sport and also your life. The hardest thing about coaching wrestling is knowing each wrestler's best move and improving on their technique, so they can become a better wrestler. Ever since Covid, wrestling has been affected in a big way. The team last year had fewer people and they were not as technically trained as the previous players. This year their goal is to at least place in the top five in CIF.

What the boys and girls wrestling teams need is to improve on getting people healthy and down to weight so they can play well. The boys varsity team meets every day after school for practices. This week the boys had a game at Western and the boys and girls team had a game against Marina. The girls team lost against Marina by 18-57. The boys team won against Marina by 42-33.

Daisy Ruiz, says the reason that she joined wrestling is because she wants to be involved in sports during high school, stay in shape, and gain more muscle. So far she has won 21/32 matches. She wants to work on pinning her opponents in a more efficient manner. By the end of the season, her goal is to place first at varsity level competition and beat her record by pinning someone under 20 seconds. The most difficult aspect of wrestling for her is when you are exhausted during a match or practice; you must not give up. Another hard thing about wrestling is cutting weight, because you have to limit the number of calories you consume and work out excessively.

Another wrestler, Tyler Thienngern, says that he joined wrestling because he had been in martial arts since he was little and wrestling was the closest connection he could make in high school. He needs to improve on getting back onto his feet and setting up more takedowns so he can get more points for his team. The hardest part about wrestling is how physically demanding it is. From cardio to strength, you have to be mindful about your body and how it can affect your performance.

Centurion Basketball Takes a Victory at Staples Center

WRITTEN BY: RUBY MILBURN



Centurions pose proudly after a victory at Staples center.

Photo Credit: Cypress Basketball

In a season where victories have been few and far between, the Centurion boys basketball team had the opportunity to play at the Staples Center on December 8, 2021, where they beat La Habra 58-41 before the Clippers game. The boys traveled to the Lakers' and Clippers' home court--an experience coach Derek Mitchell says they will always remember. Senior varsity player Dylan Higa mentioned, "the best part about Staples Center was the ambience...it was crazy to see such a big stadium without anyone in it." Mitchell, who won OC Varsity Coach of the Year in 2019, has prepared the boys for a tough season, and a potential chance of making the playoffs.

While the team could be doing better this year, Mitchell stated, "we're very young as far as game experience...we're learning how to play together as a team." He expresses the boys' diligence and resilience will pay off as life lessons in the future and help improve their performance as a team. The boys have gone 2-6 thus far, which their coach says has been, "an opportunity to face adversity and see what kind character we have."

Mitchell has been the boys varsity coach here at Cypress for the past eight years, and his favorite part of coaching is watching the boys grow as individuals and as a team. He loves "helping the boys accomplish things they never thought would be possible," and teaching them the many life lessons that can be learned from the game. His players think he's a great coach, as Higa puts it, "he brings out the best of us...he's really dedicated to our program."

Cross Country Wins Empire League

WRITTEN BY: ADAM HAWARI

Cypress High School's cross country team finished in first place after their amazing results at the Empire League finals. The Empire League finals originally started on Oct. 28, at Craig Park. The opposing teams included Valencia (Placentia), Pacifica (Garden Grove), and Kennedy (La Palma).

In the Empire League finals, the first place winner was Cypress senior, Justin Singer. With a miraculous time of 15:44, he and his team achieved the goal of becoming League Champions.

Justin is grateful for participating in the CIF Finals, and had a goal to make it to the Cross Country State Championships, although he came up six seconds short of qualifying to state. Though Justin lost, he thinks that the season was great and is hoping to do track and field next season.

Stereotypically, most people would think cross country is just running and nothing more than that, but Justin thinks differently.



Senior Justin Singer is cross Country Empire League Champion.
Photo Credit: Justin Singer

Running in general pushes yourself into accomplishing fitness goals, and it teaches you discipline and the importance of dieting. Justin finds running past 100-200 people, on different course terrain, the most exciting. After every run, the satisfaction of either winning or finishing a run is rewarding.

Due to last year's quarantine, Cross country was postponed to the start of the school year. But that didn't affect Justin. Over the entirety of quarantine, Justin was still able to train by himself and with his friends. "In order to be a great runner, you have to train consistently throughout the year."

Cross Country coach **Matt Tweed** trains on Saturdays, and the team normally runs around the school or tries to drive off somewhere else to run on different terrain. Because of the overall team's effort, the team's season was great and they have achieved the goal of becoming champions.

Athletes Commit to Colleges

WRITTEN BY: ANNA NGUYEN



Zoey Henson sporting her University of Washington gear.

With the season of college applications and admissions upon us, many of our student-athletes have already committed to schools across the country. Committing to a college means they pledge to play on the college team at the school they attend.

These individuals are passionate about the sport they play and have been working their whole lives towards the goal. **Aniyah League** (12) has verbally committed to the University of Michigan for soccer, "When I found out about UMich, I knew this was the place for me. I had always dreamed of playing for them and it's surreal that I will be able to in the near future." League is one of many other scholar-athletes that will be a fine addition to the school they attend. Like League, **Hailey Havican** (12) has already promised her great soccer skills and efforts. Havican will be attending Concordia University next fall. Currently serving as the Varsity girls' soccer team captain, Havican has a long list of accomplishments and achievements that prove her place on the women's soccer team at Concordia is very deserving. "I've played soccer since I could walk and soccer has honestly become my life. It is how I destress, spend most of my days, and where I've met all my friends. Soccer is everything to me and playing at Concordia is something I know I will love and will always be grateful for," Havican said about her commitment.

With three Division One offers and a 4.5 GPA, **George Iyalomhe** (12) is a catch. Iyalomhe's history with football makes him a stand-out candidate, he'd been training since he was a kid and has always wanted to play college football for a D1 team. "Hard work pays off and I can not wait to further my football career. Sports and academics have both been priorities of my life which is why I'm able to be where I am and accomplish what I have," Iyalomhe reported.

Zoey Henson (11) is committed to attending the University of Washington to play beach volleyball. Henson owes a million thanks to her "family, friends, wonderful coaches from MB Sand and Seal Beach Volleyball club" for supporting her throughout her volleyball journey. Henson was also honored as Empire League MVP on Cypress' varsity team. As a junior who has already committed to a school, Zoey feels relief for not having to worry about her plan after graduation in the future. Seniors are not the only ones verbally committing to schools, sophomore **Nicholas Montgomery** has pledged his efforts to Arizona State University to play baseball. Like Henson, Montgomery feels "excited and lucky to have been given the opportunity to play" and further his baseball career.

Cypress High School Visual and Performing Arts

WRITTEN BY: DEBORAH SON

The popular Visual and Performing Arts classes that are offered here at Cypress High School include Drama, Band, Pageantry, and Choir. Each class helps students develop creative minds as well as find what they are passionate about.

The band director of Cypress High School, James Quirion has been teaching here since 1999. The biggest struggle for the students in marching band this year was their mental and emotional health because they were trying to figure out how to adjust to a lot of change. "Last year there wasn't a band. It was an instrumental band. But this year, we can come back together to reform as a group in each others' presence." After the recent AUHSD Band Spectacular, Mr. Quirion said that "the students worked very hard and did outstandingly." Pageantry was also an important part of the show, because people, in addition to hearing the band, could visualize the dancing and the props that were displayed. While Mr. Quirion was proud of the work that the students put into the Band Spectacular, some students felt that they could have improved in certain areas.

Ms. Marianne Stewart is starting her third year at Cypress High School. The most recent event that has happened was the school play, 10 Ways to Survive a Zombie Apocalypse. Ms. Stewart said that she was proud and the students exceeded her expectations. "They're all naturally talented, so we would give them harder pieces that were romantic and dramatic," she said. Although the lights weren't working before the show, everything worked out at the last minute. Because the genre of the show was a comedy, the audience laughed and didn't notice any slip-ups. Overall, the students were proud of their work, as they would call it "struck into the set." After the performance, they would sit down and talk about memories that they made. Everyone felt like a family because they were close to each other.

This is Mr. Ulrich's third year at Cypress High School as a vocal music teacher. The choir concert in the quad went smoothly and had a great audience. "The meaning of success is that everyone who is involved was happy with their performance and proud with what they did."

Something that Ulrich would like to change is the number of people in choir, because out of 3,000 students at Cypress, only 70 are in choir. Mr. Ulrich said, "Currently, the students are preparing and practicing hard for the winter dinner show on December 9th and 10th. See you there!"



Mr. Ulrich and the choir students are practicing hard for the Winter Dinner performance.



"I enjoy performing at football games because it is exciting to play and watch with a bigger audience."

- Joshua Nguyen

"I feel confident knowing that people are watching me." - Lenny Alfaro

The Achieving Alpha

WRITTEN BY: ANISH ASHOKKUMAR

Achieving Alpha, an organization that helps students who need volunteer hours, is giving students a chance to learn different skills, such as getting leadership positions. The president of the Organization, junior Nithiyashree Moorthi, says, “my main goal is to give back to the community.”

This summer, they offered workshops that taught seniors how to use technology. There were also younger students who were able to get academic help and “find their true potential.” During the Covid pandemic, they were able to connect with many people. Most of the meetings are online, as well as the workshops; in-person meetings are optional. The Adviser is Moorthi’s mother and the organization is not affiliated with Cypress High.

The organization helps students improve their chances of getting leadership positions in clubs, etc. It also helps students find different opportunities. This is a non-profit organization and no one is charged anything, which is really helpful for students in need of volunteer hours or better opportunities.

To join Achieving Alpha, you must email the club at theachievingalpha@gmail.com.



THE ACHIEVING
ALPHA

Achieving Alpha’s president is a Cypress junior.

Senior Sunrise

WRITTEN BY: YE JI JONG



Seniors bond while watching a sunrise Photo Credit: Cypress Seniors Instagram

Cypress High seniors had a blast at Huntington Beach watching the sunrise on a relaxing four-day weekend. Although it wasn't a formal school event, ASB members informally organized the meet-up to make more memories. Especially after a year of online school where students couldn't participate in any in-person activities, Senior Sunrise was a perfect segue for a senior-specific event.

Seniors had an early morning, meeting at around 5:00 in the morning to catch the sun. Many brought blankets, food, cameras, and speakers to maximize their leisure time. Some seniors even brought their swimsuits and surfboards to catch some waves. Most importantly, it was a day for the senior class to spend some quality time with each other outside of school. Especially with college applications and classes piling up responsibilities, seniors really deserved the Friday off at the beach.

Jake Harris stated, "I really enjoyed the senior sunrise. I got to enjoy fresh air and watch a really pretty sight. I ended up just spending my entire day there and got to get breakfast with some people in my class. It was super refreshing because I couldn't enjoy activities like this during online school."

Another senior Eunice Kim stated, "Even though I had to wake up really early, I made really good memories. It was a really great way to bond with my classmates and make the best of my senior year."

Senior sunrise definitely was an event Cypress High School seniors enjoyed and will remember!

What's Happening in Our Clubs This Month?

WRITTEN BY: ANNA NGUYEN



Key Club arrives at Six Flags bright and early for Fall Rally. Photo credit: Cypress Key Club Instagram

With over 20 clubs on campus, there is something out there for everyone. Cypress offers clubs based on the arts, academic help, community service, career pathways and so much more for students to join and be involved in. Our clubs accomplish, create and participate in so many exciting and unique events that often go unnoticed. Here are just a few things that our clubs are doing or have coming up that will capture your attention.

Palestinian Culture Club is going to have a showing of a short information film on border control in Palestine. **Mohammed Khalil** (12), president of the club, hopes this would be a great way to “bring awareness” to what’s going on there. Khalil reports, “I plan to host a potluck as a way to have my members showcase all the different types of cultural foods there are from all over the world.” The potluck will also feature fun activities that will have the club engage and bond.

Key Club took over Six Flags on November 13th. As part of an annual event, every November, Key Clubs from across California, Nevada, and Hawaii attend a big event called “Fall Rally.” Over 40 Cypress students attended and had a great time going on rides and participating in the spirit session. Joanne Lee (10) said, “Fall Rally was so much fun, I’ve never been to an event like this before.” For a lot of Key Clubbers, this was their first Fall Rally and it left a great impact, “This was such a memorable day. Winning the spirit stick was my favorite part and I can’t wait to go next year,” reported Allen Blanco (11).

French club is going to have a popcorn fundraiser. Starting in December, club members will be selling Popcornopolis to raise money for their club to attend events and host fun activities. **Victoria Vo** (12), president of the club, invites all Cypress students to join, “French club is not limited to just French class students. Anyone can stop by and join us. We hope to use the funds we raise to attend a French movie festival we annually attend.”

Cypress’ Raising Student Voices and Participation Club (RSVP) has their first Summit on December 8th. Facilitators for this event have already met up once to prepare and will meet again.

Thankful Thoughts from Contented Centurions

WRITTEN BY: ANELINA ALEGRE

Students at Cypress High are anticipating this year's Thanksgiving now that quarantine is over. With in-person school back in business, we have so much more to be grateful for this year. Whether it's traveling to see relatives or sharing a meal with family and friends, Thanksgiving is definitely a warm time of year despite the cold weather.

There is an abundance to be thankful for this year, and students share their gratitude for the things they cherish most: good health, family that is still alive, reuniting with and making new friends. **Agam Grewal** (9) shares his appreciation for the AUHSD staff: "They helped us get out of quarantine and into school again, and they make sure everyone is safe and provided with good education."

Other students recognize important people in their life, like close friends, family, or significant others. **Kyla Cortez** (11) expresses how much her little sister means to her, describing her as Cortez's inspiration to do great things. "She makes me a better version of myself. I want her to be proud of having me as an older sister," Cortez writes. **Sophia Aguayo** (10) discloses how thankful they are for their best friend Chyan, who she met over online school. "She's definitely changed me for the better, and words can't even begin to describe how much she means to me," she expresses.

Alongside traditional Thanksgiving dishes, students share the unique cultural foods their families make at Thanksgiving. Cypress is home to a variety of diverse families who celebrate this American holiday with their own family traditions and foods.

Students share what ethnic foods they have in common: Mexican food like tamales, pozole, champurrado or Indian dishes like biryani, pav bhaji, tandoori chicken, chole.



Centurion Sophia Aguayo (far right) celebrates Thanksgiving 2020 with her family.

Photo Credit: Sophia Aguayo

In a recent Thanksgiving survey, students voted for their favorite classic Thanksgiving dish; mashed potatoes and macaroni & cheese are currently tied for most liked, with turkey following second.

London Coulter (10) shares that she really enjoys eating succotash during the holiday, which is a dish of mixed vegetables. "It's so flavorful I could just eat the whole pot!" Coulter writes. The most popular Thanksgiving tradition is playing family games, like board games or cards.

Gabby Tan (11) shares a unique Thanksgiving experience with their family: "Me and my cousins chase a random cousin down the street, and if they survive 5 minutes they get a turkey leg," Tan recollects.

Though we all celebrate it in different ways, this Thanksgiving 2021 is the best time of year to show your gratitude to someone you're thankful for.

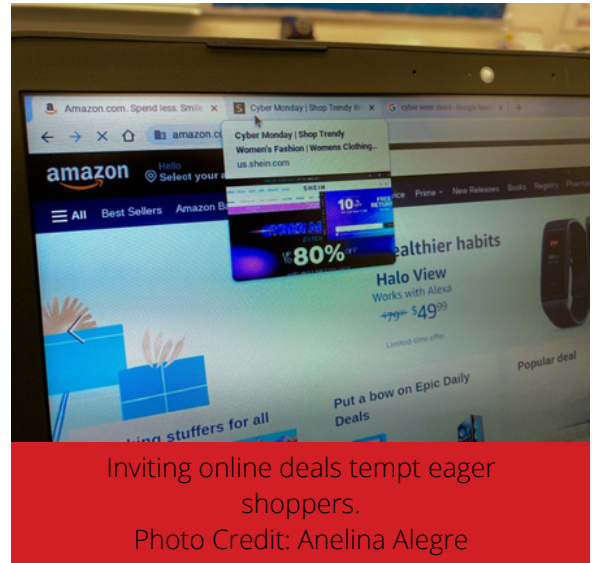
Holiday Shopping: Harmless Fun or Overconsumption?

WRITTEN BY: ANELINA ALEGRE

The winter holidays are finally here, which means that shops are once again bustling with patrons eager to browse for holiday gifts. Though holiday shopping sprees may seem like harmless fun, overconsumption during the holidays is becoming an increasingly easy fault that we should all take care to avoid.

A factor that contributes to the rising products bought is the yearly Black Friday and Cyber Monday sales. Americans take these deals very seriously, some even taking the effort to wake up at 4am or stake store lines just to get the very first deals. With tempting discounts combined into a single day, it's easy to drop great sums of money at once on the latest technology or clothing without even thinking. Everyone is thinking "If I don't buy now, I'll miss out on the sale." Companies additionally took the opportunity to boost their online shopping experience during quarantine, making it effortless for people to buy with just the click of a button. These intentional commercial tactics make people more likely to buy from their brands.

Though holiday shopping has turned into an anticipated American tradition, the consequences are detrimental to the environment; both the constant purchasing and never ending production of these goods tremendously add on to our carbon footprint. Though it's admittedly difficult on a consumer level to control the resource consumption from the companies we commission, that doesn't mean our purchases don't have consequences. A popular trend circulating social media is the influential "Shein Haul." Shein is an online fast fashion brand popular among Gen Z for their appealingly cheap prices and effortless shopping experience.



However, the \$300 haul craze is unnecessary and harmful with the fast fashion industry being not at all sustainable. BBC News has exposed Shein for violating local labor laws, and many Shein fad clothes end up in landfills after the style cycles out of trend. While it is understandable for people who can't afford more pricey clothes, there is no excuse for the influencers who drop hundreds of dollars on mass produced clothing.

I am not proposing that spenders be strictly frugal this year; the 2021 holidays should be a time of celebration now more than ever. I only urge people to be mindful of their shopping practices, and use the holidays as an opportunity to support local or small businesses for your seasonal gifts. While browsing Amazon is efficient for mindless one-touch shopping, it is important to give back to your community and support family-owned businesses around you.

Spotify Wrapped 2021

WRITTEN BY JAKE HARRIS

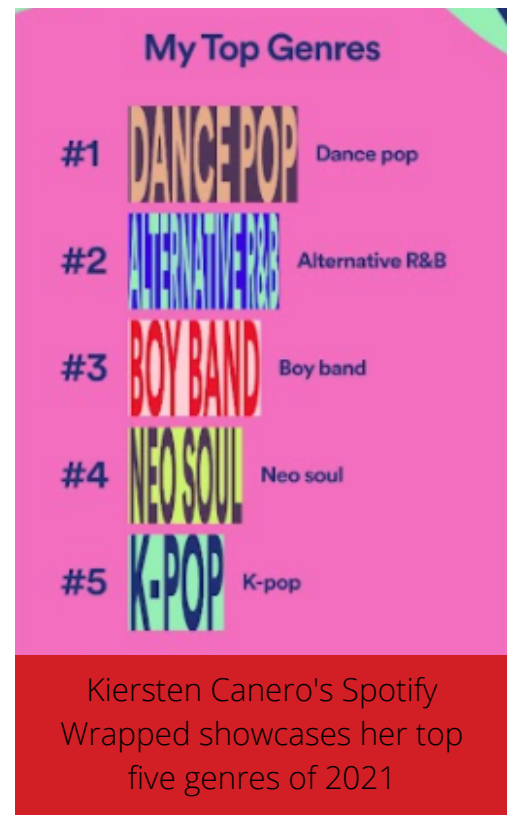
On December 1, Spotify released their highly anticipated Spotify Wrapped which recaps the artists, songs, and genres that defined users' 2021. The data was collected between January 1 to October 31 for their 381 million users.

Wrapped takes users through a 13 part story they can share on social media to show others their top 5 favorite artists and songs. The story includes users' Audio Aura which describes their music moods, their most streamed songs and the amount of minutes they listened to it, and a game of two truths and a lie about users' listening habits. At the end of the Spotify Wrapped, it creates a custom playlist of users' top 100 most listened to songs of the year.

According to Fortune, the top five artists globally were Bad Bunny, Taylor Swift, BTS, Drake, and Justin Bieber. The top five most globally streamed songs were "Driver's License" by Olivia Rodrigo, "Montero (Call Me by Your Name)" by Lil Nas X, "Stay" (with Justin Bieber) by the Kid Laroi, "Good 4 U" by Olivia Rodrigo, and "Levitating" (feat. DaBaby) by Dua Lipa. The top five most popular podcasts globally were The Joe Rogan Experience, Call Her Daddy, Crime Junkie, TED Talks Daily, and The Daily.

Senior Maddie Repcik listened to music for 33,255 minutes this year with her favorite artists being Taylor Swift, 5 Seconds of Summer, LANY, All Time Low, and Olivia Rodrigo. Her top genre was Dance pop and her favorite songs were "drivers license," "no body no crime," "betty," "traitor," and "All Too Well." Senior Kiersten Canero's top genres were Dance pop, Alternative R&B, Boy band, Neo soul, and K-pop.

This year's Spotify Wrapped exceeded people's expectations and was more interactive than ever before!





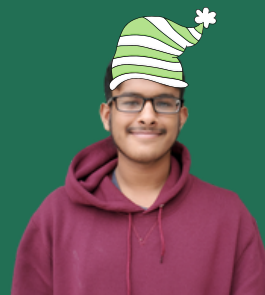
The Centurion Spotlight 2021-2022



Jake Harris
Staff Writer



Talania Wilson
Staff Writer



Anish Ashokkumar
Staff Writer



Deborah Son
Staff Writer



Ye Ji Jong
Editor-in-Chief



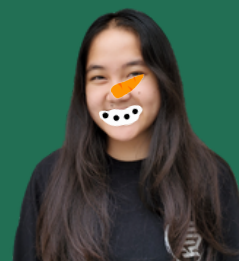
Adam Hawari
Staff Writer



Ruby Milburn
Staff Writer



Anelina Alegre
Staff Writer



Anna Nguyen
Staff Writer



Kristy Takacs
Adviser



*The Centurion Spotlight is
produced monthly by the
students in the Journalism Class
in Room 325.*