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WEST COUNTY WORLD

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Sonoma County Farm Trails' 52nd Annual Gravenstein Apple Fair was a great success. Here's what happened.

An Apple Extravaganza



Fairgoers dance to live music at the 52nd Annual Gravenstein Apple Fair. Photo by Lawson Gaylord.

By Lawson Gaylord

On August 9th and 10th, Sonoma County Farm Trails held one of Sebastopol's most important events all year: The Gravenstein Apple Fair. This year's fair included live music, apple competitions, ag-related presentations, and vendors selling all sorts of locally produced items. In addition, there were various upgraded tickets for purchase that unlocked tasty treats, artisan-crafted food and drink, and a private lounge. And all of it was a fundraiser for the Sonoma County Farm Trails nonprofit.

The Gravenstein Apple Fair was founded all the way back in 1973, as the biggest fundraiser for the then-new organization. This was long before the creation of farmers' markets or community-supported agriculture, and so was a fantastic opportunity for local farmers to connect and raise money with their consumers. Back then, Sebastopol was known as the "Gravenstein Apple Capital of the World" and was growing over four thousand acres of apple trees. Today, with the decline of apple production and the increase of vineyards in Sonoma County, that number has been cut in half. However, the annual Gravenstein Apple Fair has remained incredibly popular, and is a great celebration of Sebastopol's apple-filled past.

Turn to Apple Fair >>> Page 5

Student Life >>>

Could I Be An Exchange Student?



A deeper look into the world of international student exchanges.

By Harper Kolanek

Last week, I had the opportunity to hear more about our two exchange students this year at Analy. They both explained the differences between where they're from and Sebastopol, and they also talked about how their daily life differs from ours. For me, it was very interesting to learn about how they adjusted to our way of living compared to theirs back home. Their inspiring presentations led me to think of what it would be like for someone from Analy to exchange somewhere around the world.

As I dug deeper I learned about the many benefits for students to study abroad. One of the many being that it grants the opportunity to be exposed to new cultures and grow awareness of the world around us. Taking an understanding of the different ways countries operate in terms of how the people act, laws, and education systems.

Another valuable skill evolved over studying abroad would be learning in an entirely new language. Learning a new language from immersion versus traditional classes is very different. Part of that being, forcing yourself to learn rather than procrastinating. A student from IFSA even quoted, "While I was so busy immersing myself in the community around me, I didn't even notice that I had stopped translating in my head."

Turn to Exchange Students >>> Page 3
Or read more on Exchange Students on Page 5.



The Scoop on College Application

Academic Advice for Analy's college bound students, with an interview from College Counselor Natahsa Vanden Heuvel



By Soleil Vanden Heuvel

The day before I started high school, I waited, binder in hand, for my aunt to pick me up and drive a short five minutes to an ice cream spot not far from my house. Just three months prior, we had met for pizza across the street as I interviewed her for a history project, which was due just before I graduated from middle school.

On that particular day, I asked to meet with her to review some of my plans and outlines for starting high school and potential college plans. Only this time, it was over lemon cheesecake and peanut butter ice cream.

Turn to College Application >>> Page 3

School News >>>

What's That Class?

Adv. Agriculture: A Deep Dive



By Elizabeth Hare

Advanced Ag, animal science, plant science - do any of these sound remotely familiar? No? I don't blame you! At Analy, there are so many classes to learn about and take that sometimes while others shine in the spotlight- COUGH COUGH (AP World History)... others stay hidden in the dark. While I could go on and on about classes such as AP Seminar, AP Research, Ag Mechanics, Wood Shop, Ag Business, and even Alternate Fitness, one that really sticks out is Advanced Agriculture. Think Biology class with extra steps. In one semester, you learn all about the animal system, while in the second semester, you learn about plant science.

Okay, so it's just an advanced biology class for ag kids. Wrong. In Adv. Ag, not only do you get JC credits because it is a dual enrollment class, you also get physical science credit for your Analy transcripts. I'm sure you're all thinking the same thing right now. What do you do in class? Saying we study animals and plants is way too vague. In the first semester, you learn about the terms of livestock, the variety of digestive systems, and even a dissection! While I have not yet experienced the second semester, I can assure you that the first semester is fun, so if you're worried about some boring class that you'll dread for the rest of your life, look elsewhere, because this class is not only engaging but also has an iron-clad support system.

If you're interested in this class and want to learn more, please contact ehare937@wscuhsd.org for more information.

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Editor's Note



Hello and welcome to the Fall Issue of *West County World*! Autumn is a time of finding your place - whether that be clubs, sports, or other activities - and I think this issue of *West County World* reflects that perfectly. Inside these pages you will find advice, interviews, games, student's passions, and their works of art. But most importantly, you will find a diverse collection of stories about students, written by students.

Fall is a time of change, a transition from one year to another. For some of you, this is your first time on a high school campus, and you have spent your first quarter rushing around and trying to figure out why the Annexes are on opposite sides of the campus. For some of you, this is your last year in high school, and you are already looking forward to that warm June day when you can finally get out of this place.

That mentality of transition is felt here at *West County World* too. Some of you keen-eyed readers may have noticed that over the summer we underwent a redesign. Both the print and digital versions of the paper have had slight changes to improve your reading experience. We have a new editorial board, new leaders, and new articles. But underneath all of those changes, we are still your student newspaper team. And we still are here to report on everything Analy and Sebastopol.

So, I invite you to join me on this wonderful journey that is the 2025-26 school year. Let's make this the best one yet – I can't wait to see where this year takes us. Go Tigers!

Lawson Gaylord
Journalism Club Director, Editor-In-Chief
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WEST COUNTY WORLD is the student run newspaper of Analy High School in Sebastopol, CA. Four issues of student writing are published each year both in print and on a student-maintained website. Copies of the newspaper can be found around the Analy campus as well as in the broader Sebastopol area in local businesses, the library, and public gathering locations. The newspaper has a total readership of over 5000.

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Join us! Wednesdays @Lunch in Mr. Grech's room (Annex 6)

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For submissions, letters to the editor, or to submit questions or comments, please use the link on our website.

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Student Life

Exchange
Continued from page 1

Now you may be wondering. How can I become an exchange student? Well, Analy offers opportunities like this to students through the Rotary Club. In this organization they grant students and families the opportunity to study abroad. Now, mostly they prioritize and recommend juniors to go, but sophomores still have the chance, however, if they are proven to be mature, reliant and open-minded. As for those who would prefer going abroad in the summer, It wouldn't matter which grade you're in. sophomores, juniors, seniors and even freshmen all have the opportunity to spend a summer abroad through the Rotary program. What to expect from the summer program would be staying with an assigned family with a student that's a similar age to you. Then, that student will come and stay with you and your family.

The price differs depending on which country you desire traveling to. The Rotary club does fortunately cover the tuition, boarding with a family and a small monthly stipend. Things that you would be expected to pay for would be the plane ticket, the application fee (which is 400 dollars), insurance and any travel documents (passports and visas.) A neat thing about the Rotary club is you get the option to choose where you study abroad whether that's Asia or even Europe.

If you're wondering where you can get further details, check out the rotary website. There will be a personal interview on the 25 of October to see if you qualify and fit the criteria.

Lastly, going abroad all by yourself gives you the opportunity to grow independence and evolve as a student. Now I understand that not having 100% control can cause reluctance, but don't let fear be the culprit, keeping you from seizing important opportunities that might not be within reach later in your lifetime. Also, you don't have to travel abroad alone. You could go with your friends and embrace new experiences together, rather than facing them by yourself. Take the chance to open up to new aspects of life and carry them with you throughout your lifetime.

College Application
Continued from page 1

I had filled a binder with a college prep guide and stuck post-it notes over the surface with vague to solid ideas about how I was going to approach the chapter ahead. I am starting to understand just the amount of work that it takes to shape a future that you desire. But it is just that. Your future. You decide how it's going to start, and with my aunt, thirty-four days ago, I knew I wanted to start somewhere.

In the early stages of high school, quite literally, all the doors are open. Some could say I have plenty of time to think about my future, and even more time to explore my passions — but daydreaming now can't hurt.

In summary, the majority of Analy High School students are doing just that, exploring their passions. Whether that be on the track, field, court, or classroom. So, across from my Aunt, who was just as excited to hear about my ideas, I hoped to get students thinking about college, career paths, and hobbies that can influence their high school experience, whether you're a freshman, sophomore, or even a junior.

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So I met with my aunt again at the same pizza joint on a Sunday afternoon to ask her some questions about her job and the advice she shares with students daily. Here is what I gathered.

What is the biggest mistake students make when applying to colleges?

She responded quickly, “Two jump out in my mind. One is applying to the wrong schools. Lots of kids apply to schools or want to apply to schools that they really don't have any business applying to. Also, not doing your research up front.

Then writing essays that are so vague that the essays that could be written by any student. So, for example, if you're an XC Runner and you write all this stuff about your experience running cross country, if you sit back and read it and it's like, “Well, anyone could have written this.” Then it's boring, and you want to write an essay that is unique and stands out.”

These unique experiences and personal reflections are created while steadily building. Trying everything at once is impressive, but succeeding in a few key areas is even more important over time. Taking classes that steadily increase in rigor, taking leadership roles, and connecting with the community, even if it is just Analy, are all ways to start discovering who you are and what is important to you.

How can students tell their story the best they can in admissions?

“So rather than tell all the things you've done, describe a moment in a story form. So, tell your story, by using a story from your life, and use as many specific details as you can.”

This got me thinking about creating value based themes around stories in your life. This can help you make informed decisions and intentional pathways that align with your passions. Find things that spark something inside you, ideas, beliefs, values, goals. This way, when you begin to explore activities and projects that you love, there is purpose and drive behind them. College admissions look for several key things, among many, passion, reflection, and lesson. Showcase not just what you have achieved, but what you have learned from the experiences.

What are your tips for rounding a solid academic profile?

“I would say again, depending on who you are, if you're the type of student that takes APs, find out up front, what are all the options? ... Kind of stay in your lane, you know what you're like – what classes you tend to do better at. Take those ones. Take those advanced ones.”

I thought about how this could be, finding extracurriculars and classes that add to your values and show genuine interest. For example, finding volunteer or shadowing opportunities that align with your interests. This shows College admissions that you were willing to engage and learn from the experiences. Learning a language, gaining physical and mental strength through sports, and strengthening weaker subjects can show perseverance and add to your experiences.

What is your biggest advice for high school students with college on their mind?

“Use your gifts, and be curious about what you're interested in, and then just go for it. To explain what I mean, don't do things because you think you're supposed to do them, don't do things because you think everyone else is doing them, don't do things because you think that's what colleges want to see, do things that you're gifted at, that you love to do, that people tell you you're good at. You'll be surprised where that takes you. Anyone can go to college; there is no formula. We're all unique people, we all need to do what works for us...”

Also, I cannot empathize enough with taking care of yourself, easing burnout, and seeking advice. All of that is equally key.

To conclude, I know the journey will take time, but it will also be extremely worth it. I urge students to trust the process, ask for help, and always take the first step, even if it's scary. You can do hard things, and your story is up to you; it shouldn't be compared to anyone else's. Your voice matters, and your future is waiting.



Bright Minds, Big Impact

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Natalie McNamara
Publisher

FFA Officer Team

By Kasie Coupe

Madam President: Gracie Ascoop
Gracie enjoys raising sheep and cattle, as well as showing cattle for market. As President she aims to help our members get involved and gain active participation throughout our chapter events. Give it up for Gracie's 3rd year in FFA!

Madam Vice President: Kasie Coupe
Kasie is a multi-sport athlete and scholar with a goal of making everyone feel loved and included. If there's anything you ever need, she'll be there to help! Let's make Kasie's 3rd year in FFA the best one yet!

Mr Vice President: Angelo Escutia
Angelo show's market hogs as his SAE project. He's excited to start the year off strong, and his goal for the year is to get to know each and every member and to help them find their special spot within our chapter. Give Angelo a warm welcome into his 3rd year of FFA!

Madam Secretary: Hollie Hemphill
Hollie has been raising market hogs for fair for six years, and barrel racing competitively for nine years. She enjoys spending time riding her horses and has a strong passion for leadership and agriculture and aims to help everyone have a truly amazing school year! Cheer for Hollie as she starts her 3rd year in FFA!

Madam Reporter: Zoe Anderson
Zoe is extremely excited to meet all of the members who come her way and connect as a chapter and community throughout the year! She will be there to lend a helping hand to all new and existing members throughout the year, so don't hesitate to reach out to her if you need information on FFA events or Ag classes! We are so excited to welcome Zoe into her 4th year in FFA!

Madam Treasurer: Sohpie Marincik
Sophie is an exceptional student and FFA member, making it to state finals for the FFA Creed speaking contest. She's an avid barrel racer, and dedicates her SAE hours to working her barrel horse. Feel free to reach out to her about any fundraisers or events! Let's give it up for Sophie's 2nd year in FFA!

Mr Sentinel: Ian Huffaker
Ian transferred from SRHS his sophomore year, and has made himself at home within the chapter. He enjoys showing cattle and goats as well as riding dirt bikes. Ian will be enjoying his 2nd year with Sebastopol FFA!

Madam Student Advisor: Bailey Cassidy
A fun fact about Bailey is she loves to travel and is always up for a good adventure. She's been to three countries and fourteen states, and she hopes to travel more once shes done with her schooling! Round of applause for Bailey's 4th year in FFA!

What are the 16 MBTI Types?

An Overview of the 16 different MBTI personality types

By Diana Lazaro



October, the month where autumn, the season of transition, is at its peak. As we have already transitioned into the 2025-2026 school year we begin to learn more about ourselves little by little. Knowing about our MBTI personality type can help us understand ourselves better. MBTI stands for Myers-Briggs Type Indicator and it is a report that sorts people into one of the 16 personality types. There are many online quizzes that can help you find your MBTI. Each personality type is unique in its own way so let's take a look at a brief description of each one, so you can decide which one fits you!

People who fall into the INTJ personality type tend to be innovative, independent, and logical individuals. They are known as the 'architects' because they possess problem solving skills as well. They may appear as cold or distant people but they value meaningful connections with other people and personal achievement

Next is INTP and they are imaginative, flexible, and precise. They are also known as the 'logicians' because they think with logic rather than with emotion. They have introverted personalities and enjoy exploring complex ideas since they are open to new information thanks to their flexibility.

ENTJs are assertive, efficient, and strategic leaders. These people are natural born leaders and use this ability to create order and solve complex problems. They are also referred to as the 'commanders' because they thrive in leadership roles. ENTJs fall into the more extroverted side and they focus on the future.

Another personality type is ENTP. For their characteristics they are inquisitive, versatile, and enthusiastic. They love intellectual debate and are open to new ideas. They're often called the 'debaters' since they are into hearing different perspectives and learning from them. ENTPs thrive on challenges.

An additional MBTI you can fall into is INFJ. They are organized, gentle, and insightful individuals. They are also commonly known as the 'advocates' since they find joy in helping others. They have quiet personalities but also value their own sense of purpose. They are also quite empathetic too.

Next up is INFP and they're loyal, creative, and perceptive. Again they have very introverted and idealistic personalities. This leads to their common name being the 'Idealist'. Their personal values are their motivation to make the world a better place. Thanks to their perceptive nature they keep an open mind to different scenarios.

ENFJs hold strong communication, organization, and responsibility skills. Their social and extroverted personas have given them the name as the 'teachers'. They use their strengths to help others grow and create supportive environments. They often take on leadership positions because of this.

The next MBTI type is ENFP. They are characterized by their playfulness, creativity, and enthusiasm. They possess a natural warmth and charisma that allows them to be social and have many friends. They are known as the 'campaigners' since they enjoy starting new projects and see the potential in others.

Another cool MBTI type is ISTJ and they are analytical, hardworking, and trustworthy. They are committed to all of their responsibilities which gives them the name, the 'inspectors'. They value structure, order, and clear goals. Their introverted nature allows them to prefer working independently.

ISFJs are warm, considerate, and gentle people who prioritize the wellbeing of others first. They are capable of creating solutions that acknowledge the needs of others. They are known as the 'defenders' because they have a strong sense of duty. They make decisions off of personal values.

ESTJ have outgoing, realistic, and efficient personalities. They are organized leaders and value clear rules and order. ESTJs are known as the 'supervisors' because they have the abilities needed to thrive as an organized leader. They are also able to make quick decisions which is the reason they complete tasks quickly.

Next is ESFJ and these people are friendly, practical, and organized. They value community which allows them to thrive in social environments. They are commonly referred to as the 'providers' they appreciate helping others out. They take their responsibilities seriously and are loyal to their loved ones.

Additionally, ISTPs are independent, logical and analytical. They are practical and hands on problem solvers that enjoy adventure. They are interested in how things work which gives them the name the 'virtuoso'. ISTPs are focused on the present which allows them to work on hands-on projects.

Another MBTI personality type is ISFP. These people are nurturing, flexible, and sensitive. They are pretty artistic and would prefer to work in environments that provide creative freedom for them. They are commonly known as the 'adventurer' because they are driven strongly by their values.

ESTPs are curious, outgoing, and action oriented. They use logic to make quick decisions. They also enjoy physical activities like music and sports because they involve movement. Their energy and charm gives them the name 'entrepreneur'. They enjoy helping others in tactile ways.

Last but not least there is ESFP. ESFPs are playful, enthusiastic and friendly. Their extroverted essence allows them to thrive in social engagements and adapt easily to new environments. They are referred to as the 'performers' because they are naturally charismatic and are excellent at improvising.

Introducing our new exchange students!



By Zaira Pacheco Gomez

Hello West County, we have great news this year. Analy has two new exchange students. From the cold and happy place of the southwest of Finland we have Eden Heino and from the beautiful center of Italy near Rome we have Guilia Catalini. Eden enjoys the weather and how honest Finnish people are, as well as the free education and healthcare her home offers. Her favorite food is salmon soup which along with other fish is very commonly used in food in Finland. Eden decided to become an exchange student because for a long time she's been wanting to experience a new culture, meet new people and learn a new language. She's most looking forward to food, especially fast food and candy, in America. Her worries when coming here were the people and having to speak in another language. Going over to our next student Guila, and her favorite part of Italy is how relaxed her community is. Her favorite food is lasagna and other staples of Italian food are carbonara, tomato arepianta, pasta, rice and everyone's favorite pizza. She has dreamed of being an exchange student since she was 9 years old and decided to come to the US since herself and others considered it a place of the future and as it is very different from Europe she wanted to come see this kind of life. In terms of the American experience she hopes to go to a drive-in theater and to HOCO and Prom. She worried about the stereotypes surrounding Americans like the "mean girls" from movies, and people misunderstanding her. Both of them hope to be able to have fun and be able to speak English fluently in their time here. As well as learning some American slang. Something they want to teach us is more about their food and how to cook which I believe would be an incredible experience. It's our pleasure to host them here at Analy and I hope they have a wonderful time and enjoy the year.

Community Corner

Apple Fair
Continued from page 1

Some of the biggest draws of this year's Apple Fair were the two new upgraded tickets: the Artisan Tasting Grove and the VIP lounge package. The grove was an elevated tasting experience, with access to over thirty local vendors who offered samples, bites, and sips of their Sonoma County products. The area was set up in a secluded redwood grove, away from the heat and crowds of the regular fair. Artisan Tasting Grove co-chair Lynda Rosko noted that both the tasting grove and the VIP lounge sold out, adding, "This is everything we expected." Rosko also recalled that the Artisan Tasting Grove has gone through several changes over the years to become what it is today. "[We've had] many different variations with the [Artisan Tasting Lounge], the tasting area, and now we are the Grove," she said.

In addition to all the happy fairgoers with access to the grove, the vendors also seemed very excited to be there. Sharon R., who works at Patisserie Angelica in Sebastopol, remarked that "As a vendor here - you know what, it's wonderful." She added that, "It's great, because you get so many wonderful customers, everybody's just so brand new and themselves."

The VIP package included access to the Artisan Tasting Grove, the VIP lounge, private restrooms, and additional perks. Overall, the upgraded ticket experience this year elevated the average Apple Fair to another level.



The Artisan Tasting Grove at the 2025 Gravenstein Apple Fair. Photo by Lawson Gaylord.



Sharon R. at the Patisserie Angelica table in the Artisan Tasting Grove. Photo by Lawson Gaylord.



Mary Anna Maloney at one of the many Zero Waste Stations located around the Gravenstein Apple Fair. Photo by Lawson Gaylord.

Even without upgraded tickets, fairgoers could enjoy great food, live music, and fun competitions. At the Life on the Farm Arena sponsored by the Farm Bureau, visitors could watch ag-related presentations, demonstrations, and panels. It was here at the Farm Arena that West County mother-daughter duo Jody and Lauren McNaughton placed 1st and 2nd, respectively, in the apple pie baking contest. Over at the music stage, great live music could be heard, and fairgoers could eat their apple treats at the picnic area while listening to the bands. At Apple Alley, vendors sold every type of apple product imaginable.

In addition to all of the activities at the fair this year, the Sonoma County Farm Trails had a goal of minimizing waste produced at the event. Food service wares were all compostable items or reusable silverware and glasses. Condiments were offered in containers, as opposed to plastic packets. Plastic water bottles were not sold at the event, and fairgoers were instead instructed to bring their own refillable water bottles, which could be filled for free at one of the many refilling stations around the event.

Along with the reduction of plastic items, all of the trash at the event was sorted at staffed Zero Waste Stations. At these locations, fair staff would help visitors sort their items into various containers—pig food, silverware, compostables, recyclables, and garbage. Mary Anna Maloney, who was staffing one of the many stations, remarked that, "This is the best thing. The goal of zero waste is to make sure that we have a place to put everything. We're feeding the pigs. We're composting, we've got recycling. We have a little bit of garbage, but this makes a fabulous difference." At the end of the fair, local pig farmers stop by and pick up a trailer-full of discarded food, which otherwise would have been sent to the landfill. "It's truly wonderful," Maloney added.

Although attendance statistics aren't yet available for this year's fair, it looks like 2025 will be on par with other well-attended years – upwards of 15,000 attendees total. Several food booths sold out both days, multiple vendors reported record-breaking sales, and the fair completely sold out the upgraded tickets for both days. This year's event was incredibly successful, and the organizers are looking forward to another successful year in 2026.

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A Formula for Success?

The pros and cons of allowing Formula Businesses into Sebastopol

By **Skyler Freedenburg**

In 2018, Sebastopol passed Municipal Code 17.340.040, which included 3 parts affecting formula businesses in downtown Sebastopol. Part A prohibits “Formula business offices on the ground floor street front.” Part B prevents “Formula business restaurants.” Part C had disallowed “Formula business hotels and motels.” However, part C was amended by Ordinance 1111. According to 17.340.020, a formula business cannot have a standardized appearance or merchandise with at least 25 businesses in the United States. In simpler terms, the municipal codes prevented chain businesses from opening offices on the streets of downtown Sebastopol, and prevented chain hotels or motels from opening in downtown Sebastopol. Existing shopping centers and formula businesses that were completed before the municipal code was passed were exempted by 17.340.030. 17.340.050, 17.340.060, and 17.340.070 outlined that other formula businesses needed a special permit and the guidelines for formula businesses to get said permit. These guidelines had been in the works since 2015, when a temporary law was passed that put a stop to new formula businesses. The citizens of Sebastopol were opposed to the construction of new formula businesses, causing the city officials to take action to satisfy the community. The goal of the municipal codes was to preserve the identity of the city and to protect local businesses from competition with national chains. At the time, Sebastopol decided to maintain its character and economic values. However, in the current day, the formula business guidelines have become a topic of debate. Although the formula business policy was on the agenda, no decision has been made as of the time this article is being written. Some people believe that the ordinance should be re-evaluated to ensure that it still is in the best interest of the community and the city's economy. With the recent closure of many downtown businesses, including Goatlandia Kitchen and Hippizzazz Pizza, people are wondering if the lack of formula businesses is resulting in a lack of economic growth. Other than just for economic growth, an increase in formula businesses could also allow for a more stable long-term economy. On the other hand, other people believe that we should try to preserve the ordinance in order to preserve the economic identity of Sebastopol. They believe that allowing more chain businesses into Sebastopol would destroy the uniqueness of the city, resulting in a standardized community and economy, instead of the current homegrown, locally based storefronts. People also worry that if the vacant stores are filled by formula businesses, it would drive out local businesses, and if the chains don't work out, Sebastopol would be left with even more vacant storefronts, such as when the Rite Aid or Starbucks close.

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They also believe that the chain business would drive out the local businesses, and if the chains stay open, it would still overall hurt the community by reducing opportunities for economic development. The topic of allowing more formula businesses into Sebastopol is actively being debated by the city council and the community. If you feel strongly about where Sebastopol should stand, you can make your opinion known and influence the eventual decision by the city council.

Conversations with Fr. Damascene

By **Jonah Caron**



On September 15, I interviewed Orthodox monk Fr. Damascene, Abbot of St. Herman of Alaska Monastery, which is located in Platina, west of Redding. Orthodox Christianity is an ancient expression of the Christian faith, known for its emphasis on tradition, liturgical worship, and spiritual transformation. A part of its long and unique traditions is monasticism, where people leave ordinary life to live in prayerful communities devoted to God. While monastic life is uncommon in modern American culture, it remains central within Orthodox Christianity. In our conversation, we discussed Fr. Damascene's journey into Orthodoxy, the monastic life, and the challenges of faith in the modern world.

His Journey to Christianity

Fr. Damascene first heard the Gospel message of Jesus at summer camp at age 11, but in his high school years, he explored Zen Buddhism. “From Zen meditation,” he says, “I found that it was possible to restrain the mind from running wild with thoughts. I felt a certain freedom from that. But as I finished my senior year of high school, I was left empty. While the Protestantism I had experienced in my younger days seemed shallow, I was still drawn, inexorably, to Jesus Christ.” Continuing his search in college, he explored Roman Catholicism. One student, hoping to convert him to Catholicism, gave him Orthodox books, which Fr. Damascene found to be profound, moving, and unlike books he had read previously. “I really wanted to find the truth,” he says. According to him, many people today feel the same spiritual hunger he once did. For him, the next step in his spiritual search occurred the first time he attended an Orthodox church service. “It was night, the lights were out, oil lamps were flickering, and candles were burning. It was the first week of Great Lent, and the ancient service, written in the 8th century A.D., was entirely in the key of repentance. With each stanza of the service, people would make the sign of the cross, bow, and sing in a solemn tone ‘Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me.’ This blew me away because the form of Christian worship I had experienced up to then seemed more about helping people to feel good; in other words, it felt more man-made. But this Orthodox worship was different. It was long, and as the faithful continued to bow and intone the hymns, they were comparing themselves to the Bible's worst sinners.” Fr. Damascene wondered, “Why would people do such a thing?” The answer? “They were humbling themselves before God and repenting of their sinful condition. This form of Christianity, even though a human being wrote the service, was something otherworldly. I felt that it had come from above.” Still, Fr. Damascene struggled to abandon the idea of an impersonal God that Zen had taught him: “Zen I had formed this idea that people who believe in a personal God were just projecting their own egos onto God.”

Meeting Father Seraphim Rose

Everything changed when an Orthodox student group on campus invited monk Seraphim Rose to speak: “I was struck by him; he had this really long beard, but that wasn't the main thing. I had a sense that he was the wisest man I had ever met, and one who had set aside all pride.”

Continue reading online at westcountyworld.org

Sonoma County Fair 2025

A survey was taken by people who attended the event and here are their responses



By **Diana Lazaro**

About two months ago, the annual Sonoma County Fair took place from August 1-10 at the Santa Rosa Fairgrounds and the theme was “Hot Dogs and Cool Cats”. There were a number of reasons why people came to the fair. Some came for the awesome events taking place, enjoyed rides, or to help show animals. Some popular rides people enjoyed going on were the mega flip, white water, the zipper, the hammer, and the swinging chairs. I created a survey, asking attendees questions about their experience at the Sonoma County Fair. They reported that they wished there were more rides for teens, water related activities, and a drop tower. Another thing besides the rides that makes the fair so remarkable is the food and drinks. It had been revealed that some of the best choices were the curly fries, baked potatoes, agua fresca de pepino, the strawberry cheesecake ice cream, churros, and elotes. Every year, the Sonoma County Fair has several shows and performances happening throughout the week and many people came to the fair this year just to see these exceptional performances put on. A few of the survey takers said that the monster truck show was fun to watch and listening to La Banda Maguey perform was also delightful to listen to.

Fun Fall Festivities

Upcoming local events— when, where, and what.



By **Gabriela White**



Feeling gloomy and stuck indoors this fall season? Fall is finally here, bringing fun new events and activities to our community! Check out exciting seasonal farmers markets, cultural events, music and movie nights, pumpkin patches, corn mazes, and more.

Come see local farmers markets! The Petaluma East Side Farmers' Market is open every Tuesday at 10:00 am - 1:30 pm. Here, people can find fresh goods, baked treats, and live music. In addition, the Sebastopol Farmers Market at the Sebastopol Plaza is also year-round and occurs every Sunday from 9:00 am - 1:30 pm offering food, music, and artisan crafts. At the Luther Burbank Center, there's the Santa Rosa Original Certified Farmers Market which has been open since 1967 and happens every Saturday 8:30 am - 1:00 pm and Wednesday 8:30 am - 1:00 pm (March - December). Enjoy many vendors and wonderful music!

New, fun cultural events are just around the corner! On October 11th, visit the Sonoma County Harvest Fair celebrating local agriculture and artisans. Furthermore, Beetle Juice Jr. will be performed on October 24–November 2 and Peter Pan Jr. on November 7-16 at 6th Street Playhouse in Santa Rosa. Finally, in Santa Rosa on October 18th at the Charles Schulz Museum, Dave Eggers and Jean Schulz will speak about classic Peanuts comics (\$25 admission fee).

Looking for something to do with friends? Come down to one of the many pumpkin patches throughout Sonoma County! From September 20th to October 30th , Grandma's Pumpkin Patch in Healdsburg will be open Monday to Friday at 10am - 7pm, Saturdays 10am - 6pm, and Sunday 12pm to 6pm. At this pumpkin patch you can find engaging activities such as a petting zoo, tractors, and more!

Fun Fall Festivities Continued...

Additionally, in Santa Rosa from September 27th to October 31st, the Santa Rosa Pumpkin Patch opens Monday to Thursday 11am - 7pm, Fridays 11am - 9pm, Saturdays 9am - 9pm, and Sundays 9am - 8pm. Down in Petaluma, there is also the Petaluma Pumpkin patch open Sunday to Thursday 10 am - 7 pm and Friday to Saturday 10 am - 10 pm. This entertaining event includes food, a corn maze, and carnival rides. And fun fact– all three pumpkin patches are rated over four stars on google reviews!

Musical and dance events are coming up soon as well! Swing on down to Hall of the Above on November 7th from 4 pm - 7:30 pm for live music and swing dancing (\$20 admission fee). Also, in Hall of the Above on November 16th from 4 pm - 7 pm there's line dancing (\$20 admission fee). Kick on some boots and join in! What's more, at the Petaluma Plaza come see live jazz music– free admission all the way into November (some upcoming times include October 12, 19, and 26 from 1 pm - 3:30 pm).

Events are happening all around Sonoma County so don't miss out! Take a trip down to Santa Rosa, Sebastopol, and other local towns for fun fall festivities!

Opinion

Prop 50: Is It Really a Fair Play?

My analysis of Prop 50 and my take on whether it's really "saving democracy".

By Newen Eliscu-Saraza

Ever since Greg Abbott, the governor of Texas, approved a highly controversial mid-decade redistricting of the state in July, Democratic resistance has been fierce. This culminated in Democratic representatives fleeing the state in July, heading to states such as Illinois. The reason the districts were redrawn was simple: it was done at Donald Trump's behest. This is also what's inspired other states, like Missouri and Indiana, to redraw their districts in turn.

This has also inspired outrage among Democrat-led states, which is justified. Many of these states have been 'playing fair' by having independent redistricting commissions, notably California, and they are now being undermined by the Republicans who hadn't committed to less politicized districts. California, notably, has decided to redraw their districts and eliminate their commission, and, being the most populous state in America with 52 districts, they expectedly gained national attention for their decision.

What Texas is doing is wrong. It's totally wrong, and it's even more wrong that they're only doing it because Donald Trump said to do it. And it's even more wrong knowing that 2026 is expected to be a major loss for Republicans in terms of congressional seats and the popular vote. So if California is going to one-up them, in a way, it makes 100% sense.

But first of all: what is redistricting, what is gerrymandering, and what is the problem? Redistricting is the process of redrawing legislative districts, and many developed countries do this on a regular basis. The US, for instance, does it every 10 years, following the Census results, gaining or losing districts based on population. Other countries like the UK, Canada and Australia do this too. The majority of countries have independent redistricting commissions, but many US states don't have one.

Gerrymandering, though, is intentionally drawing biased districts by the party in power to gain as many districts as possible, being able to advance their agenda. The practice originated in 1812, when Elbridge Gerry, the Federalist governor of Massachusetts, drew a district in northeastern Massachusetts that would help his party gain an additional seat in the legislature. The Boston Gazette published a cartoon mocking the new district, calling it a "gerrymander" —a portmanteau of the words "Gerry" (the name of the governor) and "salamander", alluding to the district's odd shape. As time went on, redistricting was used to disadvantage people of different races and ethnicities, especially Black, Latino and Asian people.

The problem lies in recent history. In the 1960s, the Supreme Court ruled that congressional districts needed to be roughly equal in population, which forced state legislatures to actually draw their districts, as they often didn't do so prior to the court ruling. As a result, the political gridlock familiar with us today began to slowly grow, and it's become a particularly bad issue in the last 30 years. However, in recent years, bills have been introduced in Congress to ban partisan gerrymandering, especially the Freedom to Vote Act, which has been killed various times in the Senate after passing the House.

But back to the present: California is voting on the future of the redistricting commission. I support California's efforts to balance out Texas's power play, because Republicans are trying to cheat their way into a majority. However, I have an unusual take: I disagree with the Yes on 50 ads.

To start off, many ads that I and other Californians have recently seen say that the move "defends democracy". I understand that many people feel that democracy is significantly eroding under Donald Trump, which I agree with, and many neutral institutions, such as the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Yale, and Stanford show consistent data detailing the extensive democratic backsliding the United States is experiencing. So I understand if people feel like it needs to go.

However, many Western democracies, like I mentioned before, have independent commissions to redraw districts, which most places in the US don't. Arnold Schwarzenegger, a Republican and the former governor of California in the 2000s, led the fight for an independent commission, which succeeded in 2008, and he now vocally opposes Prop 50. I think it's ironic that an ad that claims to defend democracy is doing so by manipulating the lines on a map that affect us all.

Despite my seemingly contradictory reasoning, I do support Prop 50. Donald Trump, given his steadily falling popularity, should not try to manipulate the congressional districts of our states in order to barely maintain control of the House in 2026. Greg Abbott shouldn't have approved mid-decade redistricting, and California, the most influential blue state and most populous state in the nation, shouldn't sit by idly as Trump continues to enact his alarming agenda. But I think that the ads for Yes on 50 are somewhat misleading—democracy, in fact, isn't going to really be fixed, it's just going to be equally and oppositely messed with; and if the ads were truly defending democracy in all 50 states, the people behind Yes on 50 would take a more proactive role lobbying other state legislatures with an independent commission and citizen ballot initiatives, like Washington, to follow in California's footsteps.

I urge you to sit back and consider everything you've heard about the ballot measure. If you are an adult, register to vote and vote Yes on 50. If you aren't quite of age yet, then go out and inform other people about Yes on 50. Every vote matters, no matter how seemingly insignificant, and Trump must be stopped. United we stand, divided we fall. Vote!

Sports

Meet your 2025 AHS Girls Volleyball Team!

By Kasie Coupe



Photo by Ava Anderson.

To start off, I would like to shine the spotlight on our wonderful coaches. Without them and their enthusiasm, we wouldn't be able to have this great of a team as we do now. To start off introductions, we have our head coach, Holly Foldendorf. In addition, we also have our outstanding assistance coaches, Margaret Pederson and Isabella Puget.

Now, here are your 2025-26 Varsity Athletes:

Autumn Tucker, Sophia Lomanto, Ella Reed, Jessy Smith, Cassidy Whitestine, Sophia Broadbent-Bell, Fay Kimbro, Sophia Dutt, Sophia Pellini, Cadence Wood, Alya Clark, Isabella Romine, Layla Ramirez, and Devyn Gray.

Your 2025-26 Junior Varsity:

Lily Morris, Calia Gatlin, Isabella Eichenseher, Rebecca Weiss, Liliana Guzman, Ava Collins, L Shaw, Presley Price, Echo Villagomez, Emily Schach, Sophia Moore, Aleida Garcia, and Rily Mimmo.

Your 2025-26 Freshman:

Bella Vigil, Valeria Alvarado Rea, Iliana Barragan Razo, Maria Cuevas, Allison Nava, Chloe Alococer, Jade Fiddler, Olivia Padron, Madison Carver Wilson, Alexis Rosenberg, Kaylin Gerke, Nina De Lane, Amaya Redding, and Mari Campanile.

Meet your 2025 AHS Girls Flag Football Team!

By Kasie Coupe

This is our Analy Tigers 3rd year having a Girls Flag Football team, and we are absolutely rocking! This year we are locked and loaded, with a heavy schedule of 24 games, our players have been putting in the work and dedication. If you are interested in joining our Girls Flag Football Team next fall, keep and eye out for our Summer Conditioning around early June, or speak with Head Coach Abby Morales: amorales@wscuhsd.org

Here is a few short words to get a sense of who she is: "I'm Abby Morales, the girls Varsity head coach. I'm a bilingual paraeducator at Analy. I also am an Analy alumni from the class of 2016! I love spending time with my family and pets. Go Packers!"

Senior's 2026

Senior year only happens once — make it unforgettable !

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Helping seniors leave their mark since 2014

Limited Sessions Available – Book Before They're Gone!

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Girls Flag Football Continued...

Next, we have our Head JV Coach, Ricardo Garcia: “I’m Ricardo Garcia, and I used to be a campus supervisor at Analy. I’m beyond excited to see how this season goes, it looks like a good one.”

Lastly, we can’t forget to thank our assistant coaches, Mike Roan and Christine Elze; we wouldn’t be able to do this without your love and support.

Now, time to introduce your 2025 Analy Varsity Team:

Team Captains: Giselle White, Liliana Bloom, Ava Anderson, and Secoya Tucker

Alexa Caselli, Angelina Gibbs, Aurora Diggs, Caitlin O’Donnel, Chloe Alley, Ella Worthington, Emmalyn Neang, Gaby White, Kasie Coupe, Lexie Brady, Lyric Kempf, Maria Onofre, Stella Gibbs, Tessa Landers, Toni Landers, Zoe Swid, Zoey Lesik, Faith Hukel, and Jayla Manzo.

Here is your 2025 Junior Varsity Team!

Team Captains: Isabelle Boone, Olivia Worthington, Valerie Razz, and Emma Morgan-Aneloski

Eva Sullivan, Josephine Breckler, Valentina Ghirardelli, Payton Howee, Jordyn McCulloch, Riley

San Francisco 49’s Girls Flag Football Skills Camp

Over the summer, we had 2 of our 2025 Varsity Girls represent Analy Highschool and Sonoma County itself at the annual 49ers Flag Football Skills Camp at the City College of San Francisco. Kasie Coupe and Angelina Gibbs were our participants at this camp and we hope to see more of our Analy Tigers represent next year, keep a look out during the summer for an informational post on our instagram: ashgirlsflagfb



Photo by Ava Anderson.

Meet your 2025 AHS Boys Football Team!

By Kasie Coupe

First off, we would like to appreciate our outstanding head coach, Daniel Bourdon. Not only is he a coach with his mind set to his goals, but he is also one of the Physical Educational Teachers at Analy. Fun fact, Coach Bourdon was a former quarterback for El Molino and Analy!

Next, we have our Assistant Head Coach, Jerod Brown. Mr. Brown accentuates his athletes, pushing them to their full potential, while also running the entire school body! Not only is he the only Leadership teacher here at Analy, but he also teaches Spanish. Fun fact, Coach Brown is a former lineman from El Molino, as well as a Lion Graduate.

Last, but not least, we can't forget about all of the assistant coaches working alongside our athletes, without them we wouldn't be able to make this team possible. A big shoutout to Coach Brown-Woods, Coach Kai Hamblin, Coach Carson Pforsich, Coach Daniel Abert, Coach Brazil, Coach Tommy Pirinoli, Coach Ross Bostock.

Now, here are your 2025-2026 Varsity Tigers:

Logan Willis, Ryland Acosta, Clayton Graham, Brady Striniste, Jesse Walls, Brantz Jacobs, Darren Bauman, Jackson Rinkor, Matthew Medina, Caden Lewis, Gannon Drake, Corbin Thompson, Austin Bishop, Justus Waggoner, Brody Brumer, Austin Presley, Greg Stez, Michael Navarro, Jordan Jones, Grady Gantenbein, Nicky Navarro, Aiden Baldwin, Josef Cook, Khemrin Neang-Botia, Alexander Weaver, Lucas Lagrave, Kaleb Jacobs, Declan Goodson, Orion Green, Wyatt Obrien, Ty Sutter, Andrew McCallum, Dillon Drew, Jacob McDaniel, Lochland Ramos, Walker Lowell, Joshua Hagle, Atreyu Hopkins, Julian Guerrero, Kevin Garcia, Kaleb Gomez, Carlos Vargas, and Nick Mason.

Junior Varsity

Your head coach for JV is Coach Ryan Baretta, Coach Baretta is a former football player for Analy High School, as well as the SRJC. In addition, give it up for your assistant coaches for JV! Coach Ioan Ramos, Coach Dewitt, Eddie Espenial, Gino Gibbs, and Coach Fred.

Now, here are your 2025-2026 Junior Varsity Tigers: Giovanni Alcozer, Brady Andrews, Parker Antogini, Ramon Ay ala-Avina, Natale Bacigalupi, Logan Baldwin, Breyden Beretta, Jacob Berg, Wyatt Bishop, Wyatt Biss, Kason Brady, Kyle Brady, Jacob Brown, Carson Comaich, Freddy Contreras-Ochoa, Leon Curtis, Sean Delacour, Robert Donnel, Jordan Egger, Hayden England, Maykelohens Fontis, Leonel Garcia Rodriguez, Lorenzo Godoy, Jonathan Gomez-Neri, Phoenix Green, Jason Greene, Nathaniel Hammond, Elias Hector, William Hunter, Amitola Imdieke Morgan, Jaden Karr, Joseph Knowlton, Logan Mackert, Landon McComes, Giovanni Mitchel, Steven Navarro, Mason Nordby, Lincoln Pelm, Wyatt Robbins, Jacob Salaun, Roman Sinigiani, Gavin Sutter, Elliot Titus, Samuel Titis, Andrew Tobin, and Trenton Willis.

Congratulations to all of these athletes!

Own The Line Football

Over the summer, 8 of our 2025-26 Varsity Linemen represented Analy Highschool at the Own The Line Football Challenge, put on at Casa Grande Highschool and other wonderful coaches. Kaleb Gomez, Andrew McCallum, Joshua Hagle, Wyatt O’ Brian, Kevin Garcia Reyna, Nick Mason, Dillion Drew, were our participants, as well as Orion Green who came out with the Champion Belt!

School News

The new school houses have been rigged from the start.

Due to an imbalance in the number of people per each house, this year’s new system is already unfair to the majority of the school population.

By Alli Dannenbring

Since the start of the school year, the house scores have been pretty consistent with Aether in the lead, Ignis following, Lagooz penultimate, and Terra in last. I myself am Aether so I was not complaining or agonizing over the scoreboard and I didn’t think much of places the other houses were in besides that they were lower than my own. There was however, one day where I decided to open the 5-Star website and check to see if the order had changed. In doing this I found out that in this program they have another fun feature available: average points per member of each house. All that 5-Star does to calculate this number is take how many people are in each house and then divide it by how many points each house has. If the number of people per house were equal, this feature would basically be useless as the average number of points per member would correlate equally to the standings of houses. This however, is not the case. A very obvious measure of this is how Terra has slightly more points per member than Lagooz, but Lagooz somehow has 5 more points than Terra. This made no sense to me and had no explanation until I came to the fairly obvious conclusion that the only sensical reason that this could be is there were unequal numbers of people in each house.

Cross referencing the average points per member scoreboard and the group leaderboard I was able to find estimates of how many people there are in each house. As of September 9th 2025, Aether had 732 points and an average of 1.9 points per member meaning there are roughly 385 people. Ignis had 607 points and 1.6 points per member, meaning 379 people. Lagooz has 363 people based off of their then-points number of 581 and average 1.6 points per member, and Terra has 348 from their past points being 557 with an average 1.6 points per member.

The Average Points per Member page clearly showed that three of four houses had 1.6 points per member on average but even then there was a gap of 50 points between Ignis and Terra, even though that would have made no logical sense whatsoever if they were given equal opportunity to win and equal numbers of people in each.

The Sorting Ceremony

By Elia Delmonte

The clamor in the gym dies down as the Headmaster, Professor Wade begins the ceremony, walking through the double doors of the gym. He is followed by the incoming freshmen. You are one of these 9th graders. You look nervous as you enter the gym. You notice the upperclassmen watching in the bleachers, sitting in four distinct sections. Behind each cluster of students, a large banner hangs. The banners boldly display one of the house colors; red, blue, green, and purple. At the end of the procession the three headmistresses follow, one of them is holding an old and worn blue baseball cap with a red paw print. Another is holding a three legged stool. In the center of the gym the headmistresses set down the stool and place the cap on top of it. You are told to sit on the bottom row of the bleachers with the other 9th graders and wait for your name to be called.

Professor Wade steps forward to speak. “Welcome, let the sorting begin.” It’s a long process. You watch your fellow freshman be called one at a time to the center of the gym. They nervously sit on the stool and the headmistresses place the cap on their heads. After a few seconds of silence the cap shouts out the name of one of the four houses. Every time a house is announced the gym erupts in cheers.

Soon, your name is called. As you sit on the stool and the cap is placed on your head, you recall the headmistresses explaining how the sorting will work. The cap can talk and will sort you into one of the four houses. There is Ignis, Laguz, Terra, and Ather. You are hoping to get into the house you want. You're startled when the cap starts speaking to you, almost like it's in your head. “Mmmmlet's see here.” It pauses for a moment, then announces your house.

“Ah yes. I know just what to do with you. Right then, better be...”

Author’s Note: Ok, so I know that the houses aren’t really like Harry Potter. And I imagine you were just as annoyed as I was to spend my precious tutorial time in one of the four meeting spaces that each house was randomly assigned to go to. When they explained the houses, I thought it was stupid. And I'm still skeptical. However, it's growing on me. It's still early in the year and this has never been done before at Analy, so I guess we should try to have an open mind :)

Recipes

Is Matcha Good for You? Science Says So

A look at the possible health benefits of matcha and its biological properties

By Diana Lazaro

The well known vibrant green tea powder we know as matcha has taken over the internet by storm. This fine powder can either be whisked into hot water or into baked goods and beverages.

Matcha is made from the camellia sinensis plant that is grown in the shade which increases the amounts of chlorophyll, amino acids, and antioxidants in the leaves. An increase in these chemicals is beneficial for the body and mind when consumed, meaning that matcha can be good for you!

Chlorophyll is a pigment that gives plants their green color and it is rich in antioxidants which is great for skin health. That is why matcha infused skincare products are on the market right now and can be favorable for skin health.

Antioxidants are substances that protect cells from damage to DNA and proteins by unstable molecules. L-theanine is one of the many amino acids found in matcha and it helps improve concentration. To clarify, amino acids are compounds that help assemble proteins which are essential for human body structures. A boost in all these substances contained in matcha can improve brain function, reduce stress, and gut health.

Student Artwork



Valeria ZS



Lorenzo S



Ava O



Chloe M



Kendra W



Donnie K

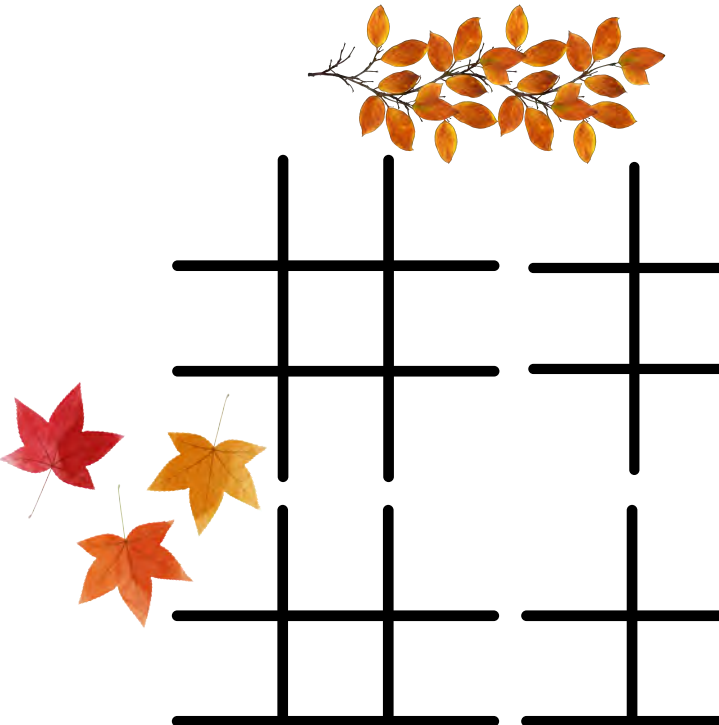


Faith H



Iris L

Tic-Tac-Toe



Crossword

Words can be found in any direction (including diagonals) and can overlap each other. Use the word bank below.

X	X	X	R	O	C	O	V	L	W
E	V	F	U	M	K	I	O	L	R
K	C	L	H	G	U	U	L	A	W
R	U	N	N	I	N	G	L	B	I
R	T	N	S	D	H	R	E	T	B
M	E	Z	A	J	E	A	Y	O	W
U	J	T	U	C	A	I	B	O	O
F	W	S	D	O	T	N	A	F	R
V	M	P	Q	L	D	L	L	R	K
S	E	S	M	D	F	M	L	Y	D

The answer keys for the puzzles are available on our website westcountyworld.org

Word Bank

1. cold
5. rain

2. work
6. running

3. heat
7. football

4. volleyball



9	7	3			4		6	2
1		6	8	3	2		7	9
5				9	6			1
	3				5	9	1	
4	5	1	9		3	6	8	7
8	6			1	7	2	5	
	8		3	6	1		9	5
	1		2		9	3		
	9	7	5	4				6

Sudoku

