



Welcome back to school, Dragons! The spring semester is beginning, and it is time to get back in the spirit of school. This issue has an article from Mr. Fridrich about being productive, highlights some of our artists, and has a couple Christmas and holiday tidbits!

# The Winter Ball '26



**Saturday  
January 17th  
Sutter Theater  
7-10 pm**

**High School Only**

**Buy your tickets in the quad beginning  
January 12th  
\$10 in quad/\$12 at door**

## Doing the Work, and Doing it On Time

By Mr. Fridrich

The new semester has started and for some of you, your minds are already thinking about the February break, spring break, graduation or promotion, and summer. It is great to have things toward which to look forward, but before we get to that future, we have to get through the now, and right now is the beginning of a new load of school work. Each year, the assignments pile in day by day. Some of you tackle that work head-on; you take advantage of the time you are given in classes and 9th block, you do the assignment when they are assigned, and you get to enjoy your breaks and weekends more often without the collection of new and makeup work. For others, your weekends and afternoons are nice and open, and the air hangs heavy with responsibility that you are avoiding. Often this air gets heavier as quarters and semesters near their end, and as that weight settles on your shoulders, the stress of tackling the work and succeeding can be overwhelming. Procrastination, though more fun in the forefront as you do what you want, increases stress and decreases success in school and life.

Procrastination is a badge that some wear with honor. Procrastination involves postponing or delaying work, but delaying implies that the work eventually gets done. Procrastinators wait until the last minute to begin, but part of their title involves the work getting done. Many of you claim that you are procrastinators, but if the due date comes and you do not have the work done, you have not earned the title of procrastinator—you just don't do the work. Procrastination does not mean late, it means late start but still on time.

Most often, people procrastinate to avoid the discomfort of feeling anxious or overwhelmed by the work. By avoiding the work, we avoid the stress of not understanding or doing less well, but avoiding the issue does not get rid of it, it only sets it aside until we cannot ignore it any longer. Emory University tells us that procrastination is totally normal, and like many other things, it is cyclical. We procrastinate, which then leads to negative self talk—a way for us to continue to hold ourselves back—so we continue to put off work. That putting off can quickly turn to not doing at all. One way to combat this part of the issue is to focus on positive self talk. Very few assignments you face in school are totally new. When you are struggling, remind yourself that you have dealt with similar work or expectations before, and that you are capable. Remember that it is alright to feel stressed—further, it's normal. Be empathetic to your own feelings, but do not use them as a reason to avoid the work.

There are some good tools beyond just positive self talk to help overcome the beast that is procrastination. The first approach is to break the work into smaller pieces. An assignment can be daunting, especially a unit final or big project. By focusing on its parts instead of the assignment as a whole, we reduce the stress of tackling the entire work. As each part is completed, the overall project becomes smaller, making it seem like less a mountain and more a hill. Eventually, as you chip away at pieces, the hill becomes a mound and it can be easily tamped into completion.

Another good trick is to word vomit everything down and polish from there. Often, we feel like we need to produce something that is ready as soon as it hits the page, but that is not realistic for most people. Overthinking the writing as we are doing it often causes us to lose direction and ideas. By dumping it out as quickly as possible and writing a bad draft, we are able to focus on content as opposed to worrying about quality. After the initial outpour of ideas, it is easier to adjust our work and make it worthy of a good grade, and often the writing is better. It is easier to edit than it is to write a first draft, and it is easier to make our writing solid on a reread than it is to put it on the page perfectly the first time.

One final tip to maim the procrastination beast is to start regardless of motivation. Many people believe that they will do better when they are motivated, but motivation, like the weather, can change in an instant. By waiting, we are simply reducing the time we have to be successful and increasing the stress we feel as we approach the deadline. Often, once we start working, we begin to feel more motivated to continue or finish. Some of you want to be artists, and creators, and entrepreneurs. Those jobs, especially in the beginning, often do not have deadlines. The entire ability to be successful relies on you motivating yourself and getting things done. Procrastination is not an option if you want to be successful in these fields of work.

For those of you who are going to tackle your struggles with time management this year, remember that it is okay to mess up sometimes. It is normal to struggle, and stress, and feel overwhelmed. You are not a bad person because of procrastination. Set up rewards for yourself for being successful. Plan your procrastination by giving yourself timely, periodic breaks. Do something you like between sessions of work to keep yourself driven. Plan a 'prize' for reaching certain points in your work where you do something for you. Set a finite amount of time for these rewards so you don't fall out of your motivation, and hold yourself to those expectations. Fun that is earned is more fulfilling than the undeserved kind that is steeped in guilt. Encourage yourself and recognize your successes and growth.

As we begin this semester and this new year of 2026, I encourage you to set an expectation for yourself: get your work done, get it done on time, and, if possible, get it done early. Learn to enjoy time without the stress of what still has to be done.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### JAN

- 5 - Spring Semester Begins!
- 17 - Winter Ball 7-10
- 19 - No School-MLK day
- 20-23 - Kindness Week

### FEB

- 5-8 - Lenaea Festival
- 13 - Middle School Dance
- 16-20 - February Break



## Imaginarium at the Cal Expo Center

By Rae Johnson

The Cal Expo Center in Sacramento has been hosting Imaginarium's Holiday Light Festival again this year! This awesome event offers an all-ages experience, and with it going through January 11<sup>th</sup>, it gives you a chance to enjoy the Winter wonder spirit for a little longer before tucking it on the shelf for the next 11 months. The main attraction, the "Magical Wonderland of Lights", features millions of lights, illuminated gardens, themed "worlds", photoready infinity mirror rooms, and interactive displays, many of which are included with the cost of entry.

Alongside the lights, the festival includes Circus performances three times each night, family friendly carnival rides, live entertainment, games, and an ice, giving this a little something different from other fairs! And there is fair and holiday food. What more could you ask for? The event opened on November 21, 2025, and goes from Wednesday the 7<sup>th</sup> to Sunday the 11<sup>th</sup>--this is your final chance to see it this year! You can get your tickets by looking up Imaginarium Sacramento, and keep your eyes out for it next year around the holiday season!



## The History of Christmas

By Addison Garcia Nystrom

Christmas, one of if not the most globally observed holiday, is steeped in traditions! Have you ever wondered why we do some of them? Many of the things we do today--decorating trees, hanging stockings, giving gifts, and caroling--have their own origins, some going back centuries.

The trimmed Christmas tree tradition originated in Germany, where Christian people decorated evergreen trees in their homes--adopted from pagan traditions--as a symbol of brightness during the dark winters and God's eternal life. Martin Luther is believed to have been the first to adding candles to the trees--super dangerous!--which transformed into the lights we now use (History.com).

The tradition of stockings comes from the Christmas legend St. Nicholas, who slid down an impoverished family's chimney and stuffed gold into their stockings (socks) as they hung drying by the fire (Smithsonian Magazine).

Gift giving can be traced all the way back to the ancient Roman celebration of Saturnalia. In Christianity, it symbolizes the three wise men bringing gifts to the baby Jesus. It has grown into a tradition of generosity during the winter season (University of Virginia).

Beautiful lights and decorations adorn houses each year also in part because of millenia old pagan traditions, but America popularized them with the boom of homeownership in the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and Norman Rockwell's famous art, from which it has exploded into decorations that today (Saturday Evening Post).

Caroling date back to pagan traditions the went through all seasons, which later developed into Latin Christmas focused carols in first millenium A.C.E. In the early second millenium, they were made more accessible by being written in other languages. Later, carolers would gather in populated areas and perform for donations using famous songs (University of Plymouth).

Together, these customs--lights, decorations, songs, and stories--create the merry spirit that makes Christmas such a special time of year!

Now that the season is over, how were your decorations this year? When you are in your own place, adulting and winning like you all will be, will you decorate? Let us know by sending us a message at mcaa.yearbook on Instagram. While you are there, give us a follow!

## "Spotlighting" Charter Artists



### Photographer: Eric Benites (12th)

Eric goes above and beyond. When creating Art, he will revise and rework to come up with new unexpected solutions. An awesome creator!

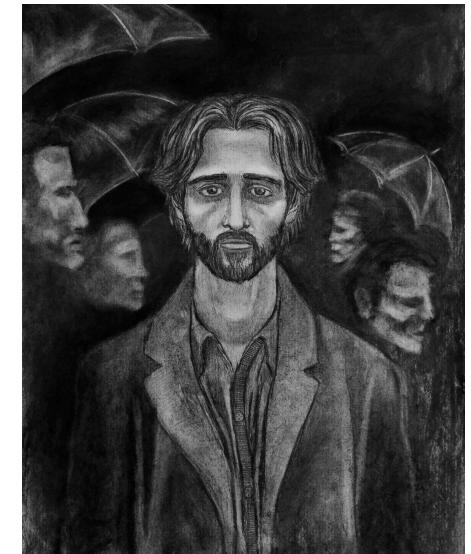
-Ms. Fogel



### Artist: Bella Wong

Mia Lopez is a 9th grader who is quietly observing her surroundings and using words as her instruments.

-Ms. Ramirez



Anthony Emmolo, Eric Benites, Bella Wong and Jorge Ojeda Parra are distinguishing themselves by bridging the gap between technical skill and personal storytelling. By mastering diverse media and refined craftsmanship, these emerging artists have moved beyond foundational exercises to execute complex, original visual ideas.

-Mr. Weisgerber



### Artist: Eric Benites



### Artist: Jorge Ojeda Parra



## New Year Coloring Page

Homemade  
GIFTS MADE EASY